



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



73

יהוה







KING MUNZA IN FULL DRESS.

•

• • •

•

• • • • •

• • •

•

• • • • •

•

• • • • •

•

•

• • • • •

• • • • •

• • • • •

•

•

THE
HEART OF AFRICA.

THREE YEARS' TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES
IN
THE UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF CENTRAL AFRICA.
FROM 1868 TO 1871.

By DR. GEORG SCHWEINFURTH.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN E. FREWER.
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WINWOOD READE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WITH MAPS AND WOODCUT ILLUSTRATIONS.



NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.
1874.

(12)

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XIII.

The NIAM-NIAM — Signification of the name — General characteristics — Distinct nationality — Complexion and tattooing — Time spent on hair-dressing — *Frisure à la gloire* — Favourite adornments — Weapons — Soldierly bearing — A nation of hunters — Women agriculturists — The best beer in Africa — Cultivated plants — Domestic animals — Dogs — Preparation of maize — Cannibalism — Analogy with the Fans of the West Coast — Architecture — Power of the princes — Their households — Events during war — Immunity of the white man — Wanton destruction of elephants — Bait for wild-fowl — Arts and manufactures — Forms of greeting — Position of the women — An African pastime — Musical taste — Professional jesters and minstrels — Praying-machine — Anguries — Mourning for the dead — Disposal of the dead — Genealogical table of Niam-niam princes Page 1

CHAPTER XIV.

Mohammed's friendship for Munza — Invitation to an audience — Solemn escort to the royal halls — Waiting for the king — Architecture of the halls — Grand display of ornamental weapons — Fantastic attire of the sovereign — Features and expression — Stolid composure — Offering gifts — *Toilette* of Munza's wives — The king's mode of smoking — Use of the cola-nut — Musical performances — Court fool — Court eunuch — Munza's oration — Monbuttoo hymn — Munza's gratitude — A present of a house — Curiosity of natives — Skull-market — Niam-niam envoys — Fair complexion of natives — Visit from Munza's wives — Triumphant procession — A bath under *surveillance* — Discovery of the sword-bean — Munza's castle and private apartments — Reserve on geographical subjects — Non-existence of Piaggia's lake — My dog exchanged for a pygmy — Goats of the Momvoo — Extract of meat — Khartoomers' stations in Monbuttoo country — Mohammed's plan for proceeding southwards — Temptation to penetrate farther towards interior — Money and good fortune — Great festival — Cæsar dances — Munza's visits — The Guinea-hog — My washing-tub 37



KING MUNZA IN FULL DRESS.

CONTENTS.

vii

A miniature mountain-range — Norway rats — Gigantic fig-tree in Moody — The "evil eye" — Little steppe-burning — Return to Khalil's quarters 373

CHAPTER XXIII.

Katherine II.'s villages — Goods bartered by slave-traders — Agents of slave-traders — Baseness of Fakis — Horrible scene — Enthusiasm of slave-dealers — Hospitality shown to slave-dealers — Three classes of Gellahbas — Intercourse with Mofio — Price of slaves — Relative value of races — Private slaves of the Nubians — Voluntary slaves — Slave-women — The murhaga — Agricultural slave-labour — Population of the district — Five sources of the slave-trade — Repressive measures of the Government — Slave-raids of Mehemet Ali — Slow progress of humanity — Accomplishment of half the work — Egypt's mission — No co-operation from Islamism — Regeneration of the East — Depopulation of Africa — Indignation of the traveller — Means for suppressing the slave-trade — Commissioners of slaves — Chinese immigration — Foundation and protection of great States Page 410

CHAPTER XXIV.

Tidings of war — Two months' hunting — Yolo antelopes — Reed-rats — Habits of the Aulacodus — River-oysters — Soliman's arrival — Advancing season — Execution of a rebel — Return to Ghattas's Seriba — Disgusting population — Allagabo — Alarm of fire — Strange evolutions of hartebeests — Nubian cattle-raids — Traitors among the natives — Remains of Shol's huts — Lepers and slaves — Ambiguous slave-trading — Down the Gazelle — The Balæniceps again — Dying hippopotamus — Invocation of saints — Disturbance at night — False alarm — Taken in tow — The Mudir's camp — Crowded boats — Confiscation of slaves — Surprise in Fashoda — Slave-caravans on the bank — Arrival in Khartoom — Telegram to Berlin — Seizure of my servants — Remonstrance with the Pasha — Mortality in the fever season — Tikkitikki's death — *Θάλαττα, θάλαττα* 443

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

(ENGRAVED BY J. D. COOPER.)

	PAGE
King Munza in full dress	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Remarkable head-dress of the Niam-niam	7
Knives, scimitars, trumbashea, and shield of the Niam-niam	10
Niam-niam warrior	11
Niam-niam warriors	<i>to face</i> 12
Clay pipes of the Niam-niam	14
Niam-niam dog	15
Niam-niam granary	20
Bamogee : or hut for the boys	21
Niam-niam handicraft	26
Munza's residence	<i>to face</i> 63
Breed of cattle from the Maoggoo country	64
Goat of the Momvoo	69
King Munza dancing before his wives	<i>to face</i> 74
King Munza's dish	79
Monbuttoo warriors	103
Monbuttoo woman	105
Weapons of the Monbuttoo	107
Spear-heads	111
Hatchet, spade, and adze, of the Monbuttoo	112
Wooden kettle-drum	113
Single seat used by the women	114
Seat-rest	115
Water-bottles	116
Bongo Woman. Dinka Woman	121
Bomby the Akka	130
Nsewue the Akka	134
Dinka pipe	146
View on the Keebaly, near Kubby	<i>to face</i> 158

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
A gallery-forest	to face 166
Mohammed defies his enemies	to face 177
Our daily life in camp	to face 194
Suspension-bridge over the Tondy	to face 244
Horns of Central African Eland	249
Golo woman	350
Corn-magazine of the Golo	352
Kredy hut	375
Interior of Kredy hut	376
"Karra," the magic tuber	399
A Bongo concert	404
Slave-traders from Kordofan	to face 410
Babuckur slave	420
Slave at work	424
Hunting reed-rats	447
Far-el-boos. (<i>Aulacodus Swinderianus</i>)	449
Bongo village, near Geer	to face 461

THE HEART OF AFRICA.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NIAM-NIAM. Signification of the name. General characteristics. Distinct nationality. Complexion and tattooing. Time spent on hair-dressing. *Frisure à la gloire*. Favourite adornments. Weapons. Soldierly bearing. A nation of hunters. Women agriculturists. The best beer in Africa. Cultivated plants. Domestic animals. Dogs. Preparation of maize. Cannibalism. Analogy with the Fans of the West Coast. Architecture. Power of the princes. Their households. Events during war. Immunity of the white man. Wanton destruction of elephants. Bait for wild-fowl. Arts and manufactures. Forms of greeting. Position of the women. An African pastime. Musical taste. Professional jesters and minstrels. Praying machine. Auguries. Mourning for the dead. Disposal of the dead. Genealogical table of Niam-niam princes.

LONG before Mehemet Ali, by despatching his expeditions up the White Nile, had made any important advance into the interior of the unknown continent—before even a single sailing vessel had ever penetrated the grass-barriers of the Gazelle—at a time when European travellers had never ventured to pass the frontiers of that portion of Central Africa which is subject to Islamism—whilst the heathen negro countries of the Soudan were only beginning to dawn like remote nebulæ on the undefined horizon of our geographical knowledge—tradition had already been circulated about the existence of a people with whose name the Mohammedans of the Soudan were accustomed to associate all the savagery which could be conjured up by a fertile imagination. The comparison might be suggested that just as

at the present day, in civilised Europe, questions concerning the descent of men from apes form a subject of ordinary conversation, so at that time in the Soudan did the Niam-niam (under the supposition that they were graced with tails) serve as common ground for all ideas that pertained to the origin of man. This people, whose existence was evoked from the mysterious hordes of witches and goblins, might have vanished amidst the dim obscurity of the primeval forests if it had not been that Alexandre Dumas, in his tale of 'l'Homme à Queue,' so rich in its charming simplicity, had, exactly at the right moment, raised a small memorial which contributed to its preservation.

To lift in a measure the veil which had enveloped the Niam-niam with this legendary and magic mystery fell to the lot of my predecessor Piaggia, that straightforward and intrepid Italian who, animated by the desire of opening up some reliable insight into their real habits, had resided alone for a whole year amongst them.*

I reckon it my own good fortune that I was so soon to follow him into the very midst of this cannibal population. It was indeed a period of transition from the age of tradition to that of positive knowledge, but I have no hesitation in asserting that these Niam-niam, apart from some specialities which will always appertain to the human race so long as it hangs unconsciously upon the breast of its great mother Nature, are men of like passions with ourselves, equally subject to the same sentiments of grief and joy. I have interchanged with them many a jest, and I have participated in their child-like sports, enlivened by the animating beating of their war-drums or by the simple strains of their mandolins.

* In the 'Bolletino della Soc. Geogr. Italiana,' 1868, pp. 91-168, the Marquis O. Antinori has, from the verbal communications of the traveller himself, most conscientiously collected Piaggia's experiences and observations in the country of the Niam-niam during his residence.

The name Niam-niam * is borrowed from the dialect of the Dinka, and means "eaters," or rather "great eaters," manifestly betokening a reference to the cannibal propensities of the people. This designation has been so universally incorporated into the Arabic of the Soudan, that it seems unadvisable to substitute for it the word "Zandey," the name by which the people are known amongst themselves. Since among the Mohammedans of the Soudan the term Niam-niam (plur. Niamah-niam) is principally associated with the idea of cannibalism, the same designation is sometimes applied by them to other nations who have nothing in common with the true Niam-niam, or "Zandey," except the one characteristic of a predilection for eating human flesh. The neighbouring nations have a variety of appellations to denote them. The Bongo on the north sometimes call them Mundo, and sometimes Manyanya; in the country behind these are the Dyoor, who uniformly speak of them as the O-Madyaka; the tribe of the Mittoo on the east give them the name of the Makkarakka, or Kakkarakka; the Golo style them Kunda; whilst among the Monbuttoo they are known as Babungera.

The greater part of the Niam-niam country lies between the fourth and sixth parallels of north latitude, and a line drawn across the centre from east to west would correspond with the watershed between the basins of the Nile and Tsad. My own travels were confined exclusively to the eastern portion of the country, which, as far as I could understand, is bounded in that direction by the upper course of the Tondy; but in that district alone I became acquainted with as many as thirty-five independent chieftains who rule over the portion of Niam-niam territory that is traversed by the trading companies from Khartoom.

Of the extent of the country towards the west I was unable

* It should again be mentioned that the word Niam-niam is a dissyllable, and has the Italian pronunciation of Gnam-gnam

to gain any definite information; but as far as the land is known to the Nubians it would appear to cover between five and six degrees of longitude, and must embrace an area of about 48,000 square miles. The population of the known regions is at least two millions, an estimate based upon the number of armed men at the disposal of the chieftains through whose territory I travelled, and upon the corresponding reports of the fighting force in the western districts.

No traveller could possibly find himself for the first time surrounded by a group of true Niam-niam without being almost forced to confess that all he had hitherto witnessed amongst the various races of Africa was comparatively tame and uninteresting, so remarkable is the aspect of this savage people. No one, after observing the promiscuous intermingling of races which (in singular contrast to the uniformity of the soil) prevails throughout the entire district of the Gazelle, could fail to be struck by the pronounced characteristics of the Niam-niam, which make them capable of being identified at the first glance amidst the whole series of African races. As a proof of this, I may introduce a case in point. I was engaged one day in taking the measurements of a troop of Bongo bearers, when at once I detected that the leader of the band had all the characteristics of the Niam-niam type. I asked him how it happened that he was a "nyare," *i.e.*, a local overseer, among the Bongo, when the mere shape of his head declared him, beyond a doubt, to be a Niam-niam. To the amazement of all who were present he replied that he was born of Niam-niam parents, but that it had been his fate when a child to be conveyed into the country of the Bongo. This is an example which serves to demonstrate how striking are the distinctions which enable an observer to carry out the diagnosis of a negro with such certainty, and to arrive at conclusions which ordinarily could only be conjectured by noticing his apparel or some external and accidental adornments.

I propose in the present chapter to give a brief summary of the characteristics of this Niam-niam people, and shall hope so to explain the general features of their physiological and osteological aspect, and so to describe the details of their costume and ornaments, that I may not fail in my desire to convey a tolerably correct impression of this most striking race.

The round broad heads of the Niam-niam, of which the proportions may be ranked among the lowest rank of brachycephaly, are covered with the thick frizzly hair of what are termed the true negroes; this is of an extraordinary length, and arranged in long plaits and tufts flowing over the shoulders and sometimes falling as low as the waist. The eyes, almond-shaped and somewhat sloping, are shaded with thick, sharply-defined brows, and are of remarkable size and fulness; the wide space between them testifies to the unusual width of the skull, and contributes a mingled expression of animal ferocity, warlike resolution, and ingenuous candour. A flat square nose, a mouth of about the same width as the nose, with very thick lips, a round chin, and full plump cheeks, complete the countenance, which may be described as circular in its general contour.

The body of the Niam-niam is ordinarily inclined to be fat, but it does not commonly exhibit much muscular strength. The average height does not exceed that of Europeans, a stature of 5 feet 10½ inches being the tallest that I measured. The upper part of the figure is long in proportion to the legs, and this peculiarity gives a strange character to their movements, although it does not impede their agility in their war dances.

The skin in colour is in no way remarkable. Like that of the Bongo, it may be compared to the dull hue of a cake of chocolate. Among the women, detached instances may be found of various shades of a copper-coloured complexion, but the ground-tint is always the same—an earthy red, in contrast to the bronze tint of the true Ethiopian (Kushitic)

racés of Nubia. As marks of nationality, all the "Zandey" score themselves with three or four tattooed squares filled up with dots; they place these indiscriminately upon the forehead, the temples, or the cheeks. They have, moreover, a figure like the letter X under the breasts; and in some exceptional cases they tattoo the bosom and upper parts of the arm with a variety of patterns, either stripes, or dotted lines, or zigzags. No mutilation of the body is practised by either sex, but this remark must be subject to the one exception that they fall in with the custom, common to the whole of Central Africa, of filing the incisor teeth to a point, for the purpose of effectually griping the arm of an adversary either in wrestling or in single combat.

On rare occasions, a piece of material made from the bark of the Urostigma is worn as clothing; but, as a general rule, the entire costume is composed of skins, which are fastened to a girdle and form a picturesque drapery about the loins. The finest and most variegated skins are chosen for this purpose, those of the genet and colobus being held in the highest estimation; the long black tail of the quereza monkey (*Colobus*) is also fastened to the dress. Only chieftains and members of royal blood have the privilege of covering the head with a skin, that of the serval being most generally designated for this honour. In crossing the dewy steppes in the early morning during the rainy season, the men are accustomed to wear a large antelope hide, which is fastened round the neck, and, falling to the knees, effectually protects the body from the cold moisture of the long grass. A covering, which always struck me as very graceful, was formed from the skin of the harness bush-buck (*A. scripta*), of which the dazzling white stripes on a yellowish ground never fail to be very effective. The sons of chieftains wear their dress looped up on one side, so that one leg is left entirely bare.

The men take an amount of trouble in arranging their hair which is almost incredible, whilst nothing could be more

simple and unpretending than the ordinary head-gear of the women. It would, indeed, be a matter of some difficulty to discover any kind of plaits, tufts, or top-knots which has not already been tried by the Niam-niam men. The hair is usually parted right down the middle; towards the forehead it branches off, so as to leave a kind of triangle; from the fork which is thus formed a tuft is raised, and carried back to be fastened behind; on either side of this tuft the hair is



Remarkable head-dress of the Niam-niam.

arranged in rolls, like the ridges and crevices of a melon. Over the temples separate rolls are gathered up into knots, from which hang more tufts, twisted like cord, that fall in bunches all round the neck, three or four of the longest tresses being allowed to go free over the breast and shoulders. The women dress their hair in a simpler but somewhat similar manner, omitting the long plaits and tufts. The most peculiar head-gear that I saw was upon some men who

came from the territory of Keefa, and of this a representation is given in the accompanying portrait. These people reminded me very much of the description given by Livingstone of the Balonda, that people of Londa, on the Zambesi, which he came across during his first journey. The head is encircled by a series of rays like the glory which adorns the likeness of a saint. This circle is composed entirely of the man's own hair, single tresses being taken from all parts of the head and stretched tightly over a hoop, which is ornamented with cowries. The hoop is fastened to the lower rim of a straw hat by means of four wires, which are drawn out before the men lie down to sleep, when the whole arrangement admits of being folded back. This elaborate coiffure demands great attention, and much time must be devoted to it every day. It is only the men who wear any covering at all upon their head: they use a cylindrical hat without any brim, square at the top and always ornamented with a waving plume of feathers; the hat is fastened on by large hair-pins, made either of iron, copper, or ivory, and tipped with crescents, tridents, knobs, and various other devices.

A very favourite decoration is formed out of the incisor teeth of a dog strung together under the hair, and hanging along the forehead like a fringe. The teeth of different rodentia likewise are arranged as ornaments that resemble strings of coral. Another ornament, far from uncommon, is cut out of ivory in imitation of lions' teeth, and arranged in a radial fashion all over the breast, the effect of the white substance in contrast with the dark skin being very striking. Altogether the decoration may be considered as imposing as the pointed collar of the days of chivalry, and is quite in character with the warlike nation who find their pastime in hunting. Glass beads are held in far less estimation by the Niam-niam than by the neighbouring races; and only that lazuli blue sort which I have men-

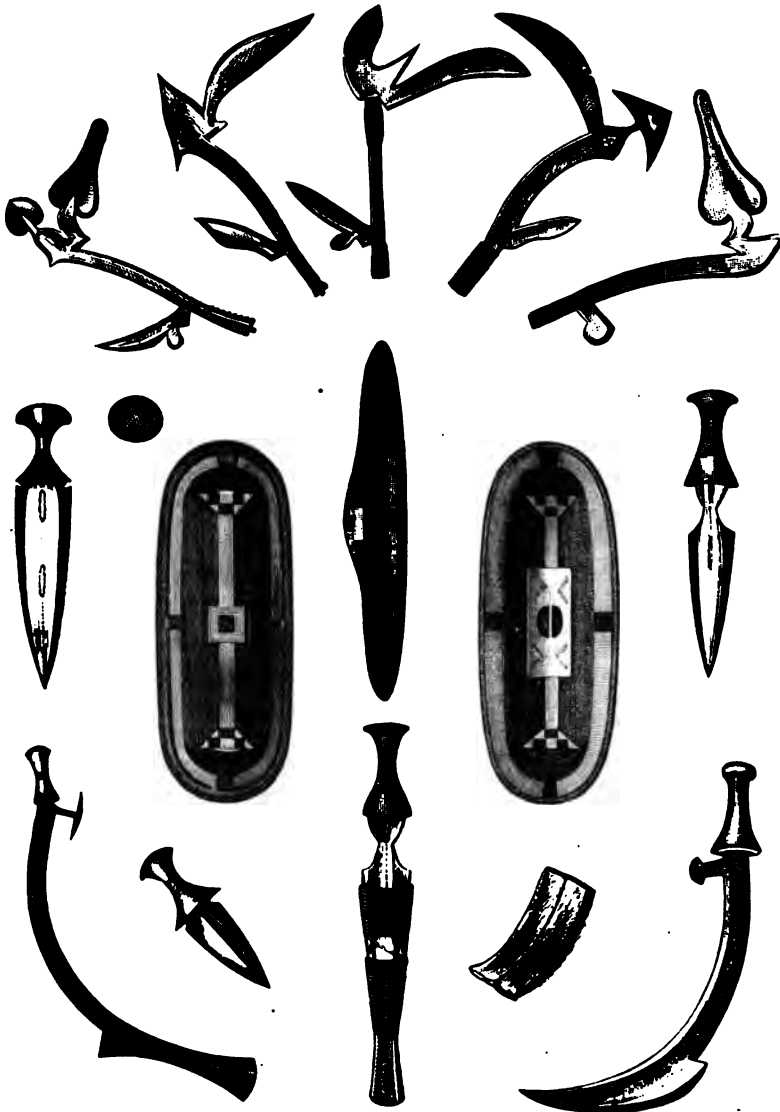
tioned as known in the Khartoom market by the name of "mandyoor" finds any favour at all amongst them. Cowries are often used to trim the girdles as well as the head-gear.

The principal weapons of the Niam-niam are their lances and their trumbashes. The word "trumbash," which has been incorporated into the Arabic of the Soudan, is the term employed in Sennaar to denote generally all the varieties of missiles that are used by the negro races; it should, however, properly be applied solely to that sharp flat projectile of wood, a kind of boomerang, which is used for killing birds or hares, or any small game: when the weapon is made of iron, it is called "kulbeda." The trumbash of the Niam-niam* consists ordinarily of several limbs of iron, with pointed prongs and sharp edges. Iron missiles very similar in their shape are found among the tribes of the Tsad basin; and a weapon constructed on the same principle, the "changer manger," is in use among the Marghy and the Musgoo.

The trumbashes are always attached to the inside of the shields, which are woven from the Spanish reed, and are of a long oval form, covering two-thirds of the body; they are ornamented with black and white crosses or other devices, and are so light that they do not in the least impede the combatants in their wild leaps. An expert Niam-niam, by jumping up for a moment, can protect his feet from the flying missiles of his adversary. Bows and arrows, which, as handled by the Bongo, give them a certain advantage, are not in common use among the Niam-niam, who possess a peculiar weapon of attack in their singular knives, that have blades like sickles. The Monbuttoo, who are far more skilful smiths than the Niam-niam, supply them with most of these weapons, receiving

* The accompanying illustration (page 10) gives examples of five different forms of trumbash.

in return a heavy kind of lance, that is adapted for the elephant and buffalo chase.



Knives, scimitars, trumbashes, and shield of the Niam-niam.
(The shield is represented in three different positions.)

Such are the details with which I present the reader with my portrait of the Niam-niam in his full accoutrement of war. With his lance in one hand, his woven shield and trumbash in the other—with his scimitar in his girdle, and his loins encircled by a skin, to which are attached the tails



of several animals—adorned on his breast and on his forehead by strings of teeth, the trophies of war or of the chase—his long hair floating freely over his neck and shoulders—his large keen eyes gleaming from beneath his

heavy brow—his white and pointed teeth shining from between his parted lips—he advances with a firm and defiant bearing, so that the stranger as he gazes upon him may well behold, in this true son of the African wilderness, every attribute of the wildest savagery that may be conjured up by the boldest flight of fancy. It is therefore by no means difficult to account for the deep impression made by the Niam-niam on the fantastic imagination of the Soudan Arabs. I have seen the wild Bishareen and other Bedouins of the Nubian deserts; I have gazed with admiration upon the stately war-dress of the Abyssinians; I have been riveted with surprise at the supple forms of the mounted Baggara: but nowhere, in any part of Africa, have I ever come across a people that in every attitude and every motion exhibited so thorough a mastery over all the circumstances of war or of the chase as these Niam-niam. Other nations in comparison seemed to me to fall short in the perfect ease—I might almost say, in the dramatic grace—that characterised their every movement.

In describing this people, it is hard to determine how far they ought to be designated as a nation of hunters, or one of agriculturists, the two occupations apparently being equally distributed between the two sexes. The men most studiously devote themselves to their hunting, and leave the culture of the soil to be carried on exclusively by the women. Occasionally, indeed, the men may bring home a supply of fruits, tubers and funguses from their excursions through the forests, but practically they do nothing for the support of their families beyond providing them with game. The agriculture of the Niam-niam, in contrast with that of the Bongo, involves but a small outlay of labour. The more limited area of the arable land, the larger number of inhabitants that are settled on every square mile, the greater productiveness of the soil, of which in some districts the exuberance is unsurpassed—all combine to make the

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•

•



NIAM-NIAM WARRIORS.

cultivation of the country supremely easy. The entire land is pre-eminently rich in many spontaneous products, animal and vegetable alike, that conduce to the direct maintenance of human life.

The *Eleusine coracana* (the "raggi" of the East Indies), a cereal which I had found only scantily propagated among the people that I have hitherto described, is here the staple of cultivation; sorghum in most districts is quite unknown, and maize is only grown in inconsiderable quantities.

Here, as in Abyssinia (where its product is called *toccusso*), eleusine affords a material for a very palatable beer.* In the Mohammedan Soudan the inhabitants, from cold fermented sorghum-dough, extract the well-known *merissa*; and by first warming the dough, and exercising more care and patience in the process, is made the *bilbil* of the *Takareer*; neither of these beverages, however, to our palate would be much superior to sour pap: even the *booza* of Egypt, made though it is from wheat, is hardly in any respect superior in quality. But the drink which by the *Niam-niam* is prepared from their eleusine is really capable, from the skill with which it is manipulated, of laying a fair claim to be known as *beer*. It is quite bright; it is of a reddish-pale brown colour, and it is regularly brewed from the malted grain, without the addition of any extraneous ingredient; it has a pleasant, bitter flavour, derived from the dark husks, which, if they were mixed in their natural condition with the dough, would impart a twang that would be exceedingly unpalatable. How large is the proportion of beer consumed by the *Niam-niam* may be estimated by simply observing the ordinary way in which they store their corn. As a regular rule, there are three granaries allotted to each dwelling, of which two are made

* The brewing of beer from malted eleusine is practised in many of the heathen negro countries; and in South Africa the *Makalaka*, a branch of the great Bantoo race, are said to devote a considerable attention to it.

to suffice for the supply which is to contribute the meal necessary for the household; the other is entirely devoted to the grain that has been malted.

Manioc, sweet potatoes, yams, and colocasiæ are cultivated with little trouble, and rarely fail to yield excellent crops. Plantains are only occasionally seen in the east, and from the districts in which I travelled, I should judge that they are not a main support of life at any latitude higher than 4° N. Sugar-canes and oil-palms entirely failed in this part of the land, but I was informed that they were as plentiful in Keefa's territory as they are among the Mon-buttoo.



Clay pipes of the Niam-niam.

All the Niam-niam are tobacco-smokers. Their name for the *Nicotiana tabacum* is "gundey," and they are the only people of the Bahr-el-Ghazal district that have a special designation for the plant. The other sort, *N. rustica*, which, on the contrary, has a local appellation in nearly every dialect of the neighbouring nations (apparently denoting

that the plant is indigenous to Central Africa) is utterly unknown throughout the country. The people smoke from clay pipes of peculiar form, consisting of elongated bowls without stems. Like other negro races that remain untainted by Islamism, they abstain from ever chewing the tobacco.



Niam-niam Dog.

In broad terms, it may be stated that no cattle at all exists in the land; the only domestic animals are poultry and dogs. The dogs belong to a small breed resembling the wolf-dog, but with short sleek hair; they have ears that are large and always erect, and a short curly tail like that of a young pig. They are usually of a bright yellowish tan colour, and very often have a white stripe upon the neck; their lanky

muzzle projects somewhat abruptly from an arched forehead; their legs are short and straight, thus demonstrating that the animals have nothing in common with the terrier breed depicted upon the walls of Egyptian temples, and of which the African origin has never been proved. Like dogs generally in the Nile district, they are deficient in the dew-claws of the hind-feet. They are made to wear little wooden bells round their necks, so that they should not be lost in the long steppe grass. After the pattern of their masters they are inclined to be corpulent, and this propensity is encouraged as much as possible, dogs' flesh being esteemed one of the choicest delicacies of the Niam-niam.

Cows and goats are familiar only by report, although it may happen occasionally that some are brought in as the result of raids that have been perpetrated upon the adjacent territories of the Babuckur and the Mittoo. There would hardly seem to be any specific words in the language to denote either sheep, donkeys, horses, or camels, which, according to common conception, would all come very much under the category of fabulous animals.

Although the Niam-niam have a few carefully-prepared dishes of which they partake, in a general way they exhibit as little nicety or choice in their diet as is shown by all the tribes (with the remarkable exception of the Dinka) of the Bahr-el-Ghazal district. The most palatable mess that I found amongst them was composed of the pulp of fresh maize, ground while the grain is still soft and milky, cleansed from the bran, and prepared carefully so that it was not burnt to the bottom of the pot. The mode of preparation is rather ingenious. A little water having been put over the fire till it is just beginning to boil, the raw meal, which has previously been rolled into small lumps, is very gently shaken in, and, having been allowed to simmer for a time, the whole is finally stirred up together.

The acme, however, of all earthly enjoyments would seem

to be *meat*. "Meat! meat!" is the watchword that resounds in all their campaigns. In certain places and at particular seasons the abundance of game is very large, and it might readily be imagined that the one prevailing and permanent idea of this people would be how to chase and secure their booty; but, as I have remarked before, there is no greater evidence of the real difference between the disposition of nations than that which is afforded by their general expression for food. As, for example, the Bongo verb "to eat" is "*mony*," which is their ordinary designation of sorghum, their *corn*; so the Niam-niam word is identical with "*pushyoh*," which is their common name for *meat*.

Just as in his investigation of the animal and vegetable kingdoms the naturalist is attracted to the very lowest organizations because they contain the germs of the higher and more complicated, in the same degree does the interest of the traveller centre upon the simplest development of culture, because he knows that it is the embryo of the most advanced civilization.

The accuracy of the report of the cannibalism which has uniformly been attributed to the Niam-niam by every nation which has had any knowledge at all of their existence, would be questioned by no one who had a fair opportunity of investigating the origin of my collection of skulls. To a general rule, of course, there may be exceptions here as elsewhere; and I own that I have heard of other travellers to the Niam-niam lands who have visited the territories of Tombo and Bazimbey, lying to the west of my route, and who have returned without having witnessed any proof of the practice. Piaggia, moreover, resided for a considerable time in those very districts, and yet was only once a witness of anything of the kind; and that, as he records, was upon the occasion of a campaign, when a slaughtered foe was devoured from actual bloodthirstiness and hatred. From my own knowledge, too, I can mention chiefs, like Wando, who

vehemently repudiated the idea of eating human flesh, although their constant engagement in war furnished them with ample opportunity for gratifying their taste if they desired. But still, taking all things into account, as well what I heard as what I saw, I can have no hesitation in asserting that the Niam-niam are anthropophagi; that they make no secret of their savage craving, but ostentatiously string the teeth of their victims around their necks, adorning the stakes erected beside their dwellings for the exhibition of their trophies with the skulls of the men whom they have devoured. Human fat is universally sold. When eaten in considerable quantity, this fat is presumed to have an intoxicating effect; but although I heard this stated as a fact by a number of the people, I never could discover the foundation upon which they based this strange belief.

In times of war, people of all ages, it is reported, are eaten up, more especially the aged, as forming by their helplessness an easier prey to the rapacity of a conqueror; or at any time should any lone and solitary individual die, uncared for and unheeded by relatives, he would be sure to be devoured in the very district in which he lived. In short, all who with ourselves would be consigned to the knife of the anatomist would here be disposed of by this melancholy destiny.

I have already had occasion to mention how the Nubians asserted that they knew cases in which Bongo bearers who had died from fatigue had been dug out from the graves in which they had been buried, and, according to the statements of Niam-niam themselves—who did not disown their cannibalism—there were no bodies rejected as unfit for food except those which had died from some loathsome cutaneous disease. In opposition to all this, I feel bound to record that there are some Niam-niam who turn with such aversion from any consumption of human flesh that they would

peremptorily refuse to eat out of the same dish with any one who was a cannibal. The Niam-niam may be said to be generally particular at their meals, and when several are drinking together they may each be observed to wipe the rim of the drinking vessel before passing it on.

Of late years our knowledge of Central Africa has been in many ways enlarged, and various well-authenticated reports of the cannibalism of some of its inhabitants have been circulated; but no explanation which can be offered for this unsolved problem of psychology (whether it be considered as a vestige of heathen worship, or whether it be regarded as a resource for supplying a deficiency of animal food) can mitigate the horror that thrills through us at every repetition of the account of the hideous and revolting custom. Among all the nations of Africa upon whom the imputation of this odious custom notoriously rests, the Fan, who dwell upon the equatorial coasts of the west, have the repute of being the greatest rivals of the Niam-niam. Eye-witnesses agree in affirming that the Fan barter their dead among themselves, and that cases have been known where corpses already buried have been disinterred in order that they might be devoured. According to their own accounts, the Fan migrated from the north-east to the western coast. In various particulars they evidently have a strong affinity with the Niam-niam. Both nations have many points of resemblance in dress and customs: alike they file their teeth to sharp points; they dress themselves in a material made from bark, and stain their bodies with red wood; the chiefs wear leopard skins as an emblem of their rank; and all the people lavish the same elaborate care upon the arrangement of their tresses. The complexion of the Fan is of the same copper-brown as that of the Niam-niam, and they indulge in similar orgies and wild dances at the period of every full moon; they moreover pursue the same restless hunter life. They would appear to be the same of whom the old

Portuguese writers have spoken under the name of "Yagas," and who are said, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to have laid waste the kingdom of Loango.

No regular towns or villages exist throughout the Niam-niam country. The huts, grouped into little hamlets, are scattered about the cultivated districts, which are separated from one another by large tracts of wilderness many miles in extent. The residence of a prince differs in no respect from that of ordinary subjects, except in the larger number of

huts provided for himself and his wives. The harem collectively is called a "bodimoh." *

The architecture of the eastern Niam-niam corresponds very nearly with what may be seen in many other parts of Central Africa. The conical roofs are higher and more pointed than those of the Bongo and Dinka, having a projection beyond the clay walls of the hut, which affords a good shelter from the rain. This projection is supported by posts, which give the whole building the semblance of being surrounded by a verandah. The huts that are used for cooking have roofs still



Niam-niam Granary.

more pointed than those which serve for sleeping. Other little huts, with bell-shaped roofs, erected in a goblet-shape upon a substructure of clay, and furnished with only one

* "Bodimoh," in the Zandey dialect, has also the meaning of "papyrus."

small aperture, are called "bamogee," and are set apart, as being secure from the attacks of wild beasts, for sleeping-places of the boys, as soon as they are of an age to be separated from the adults.

Every sovereign prince bears the title of "Bya," which is pronounced very much like the French word *bien*. His power is limited to the calling together of the men who are capable of bearing arms, to the execution in person of those condemned to death, and to determining whether there shall be peace or war. Except the



Bamogee : or hut for the boys.

ivory and the moiety of elephant's flesh, he enjoys no other revenue; for his means of subsistence he depends upon his farms, which are worked either by his slaves or more generally by his numerous wives. Towards the west, where a flourishing slave-trade is driven to the cost of the oppressed inhabitants who are not true Zandey, a portion of the tribute is raised by a conscription of young girls and boys, a part of the purchase-money paid by the Darfoor traders to the chief being handed over to the parents who are thus robbed of their children.

Although a Niam-niam chieftain disdains external pomp and repudiates any ostentatious display, his authority in one respect is quite supreme. Without his orders no one would for a moment entertain a thought either of opening war or concluding peace. The defiant imperious bearing of the chiefs alone constitutes their outward dignity, and there are

some who in majestic deportment and gesture might vie with any potentate of the earth. The dread with which they inspire their subjects is incredible: it is said that for the purpose of exhibiting their power over life and death they will occasionally feign fits of passion, and that, singling out a victim from the crowd, they will throw a rope about his neck, and with their own hands cut his throat with one stroke of their jagged scimitar. This species of African "Cæsarism" vividly recalls the last days of Theodore, King of Abyssinia.

The eldest son of a chief is considered to be the heir to his title and dignity, all the other sons being entrusted with the command of the fighting forces in separate districts, and generally being assigned a certain share of the hunting booty. At the death of a chief, however, the firstborn is frequently not acknowledged by all his brothers; some of them perchance will support him, whilst others will insist upon their right to become independent rulers in the districts where they have been acting as "behnky." Contentions of this character are continually giving rise to every kind of aggression and repeated deeds of violence.*

Notwithstanding the general warlike spirit displayed by the Niam-niam, it is a very singular fact that the chieftains very rarely lead their own people into actual engagement, but are accustomed, in anxious suspense, to linger about the environs of the "mbanga," ready, in the event of tidings of defeat, to decamp with their wives and treasures into the most inaccessible swamps, or to betake themselves for concealment to the long grass of the steppes. In the heat of combat each discharge of lances is accompanied by the loudest and wildest of battle-cries, every man as he hurls his

* Of the thirty-five chieftains who rule over these 48,000 square miles of territory, comparatively few in any way merit the designation of king. The most powerful are Kanna and Mofio, whose dominions are in extent equal to about a dozen of the others.

weapon shouting aloud the name of his chief. In the intervals between successive attacks the combatants retire to a safe distance, and mounting any eminence that may present itself, or climbing to the summit of the hills of the white ants, which sometimes rise to a height of 12 or 15 feet, they proceed to assail their adversaries, for the hour together, in the most ludicrous manner, with every invective and every epithet of contempt and defiance they can command. During the few days that we were obliged to defend ourselves by an abattis against the attacks of the natives in Wando's southern territory, we had ample opportunity of hearing these accumulated opprobriums. We could hear them vow that the "Turks" should perish, and declare that not one of them should quit the country alive; and then we recognised the repeated shout, "To the caldron with the Turks!" rising to the eager climax, "Meat! meat!" It was emphatically announced that there was no intention to do any injury to the white man, because he was a stranger and a new-comer to the land; but I need hardly say that, under the circumstances, I felt little inclination to throw myself upon their mercy.

It is in a measure anticipating the order of events, but I may here allude to the remarkable symbolism by which war was declared against us on the frontiers of Wando's territory when we were upon our return journey. Close on the path, and in full view of every passenger, three objects were suspended from the branch of a tree, viz. an ear of maize, the feather of a fowl, and an arrow. The sight seemed to recall the defiant message sent to the great King of Persia, when he would penetrate to the heart of Scythia. Our guides readily comprehended, and as readily explained, the meaning of the emblems, which were designed to signify that whoever touched an ear of maize or laid his grasp upon a single fowl would assuredly be the victim of the arrow. Without waiting, however, for any depredations on our part,

the Niam-niam, with the basest treachery, attacked us on the following day.

In hunting, the Niam-niam employ very much the same contrivances of traps, pits, and snares as the Bongo; but their *battues* for securing the larger animals are conducted both more systematically and on a more extensive scale.

In close proximity to each separate group of hamlets, and more frequently than not at the threshold of the abodes of the local chieftains known as the "borrumbanga," or "chief court," there is always a huge wooden kettledrum, made of a hollow stem mounted upon four feet. The sides of this are of unequal thickness, so that when the drum is struck it is capable of giving two perfectly distinct sounds. According to the mode or time in which these sounds are rendered, *three* different signals are denoted, the first being the signal for war, another that for hunting, and the third a summons to a festival. Sounded originally in the mbanga of the chief, these signals are in a few minutes repeated on the kettledrums of the "borrumbangas" of the district, and in an incredibly short space of time some thousands of men, armed if need be, are gathered together.

Perhaps the most frequent occasions on which these assemblages are made arise from some elephants having been seen in the adjacent country. As soon as the force is collected, the elephants are driven towards some tracts of dense grass that have been purposely spared from the steppe burning. Provided with firebrands, the crowd surrounds the spot; the conflagration soon extends on all sides, until the poor brutes, choked and scorched, fall a helpless prey to their destroyers, who despatch them with their lances. Since not only the males, with their large and valuable tusks, but the females also with the young, are included in this wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter, it may easily be imagined how year by year the noble animal is fast being exterminated. The avarice of the chiefs, ever desirous of

copper, and the greediness of the people, ever anxious for flesh, make them all alike eager for the chase. I constantly saw the natives returning to their huts with a large bundle of what at first I imagined was firewood, but which in reality was their share of elephant-meat, which after being cut into strips and dried over a fire had all the appearance of a log of wood.

The thickets along the river-banks abound in many kinds of wild fowl, which the natives catch by means of snares. The most common are guinea-fowl and francolins, which are caught by a bait that is rather unusual in other places. Instead of scattering common corn in the neighbourhood of the traps, the people make use of fragments of a fleshy *Stapelia*. This little succulent grows on the dry parts of the steppe, and is frequently found about the white ant-hills; it is likewise naturalised in Arabia and Nubia, and in a raw condition is sometimes eaten as human food. Birds are very fond of it, and so approved is it as a bait that I not unfrequently found it growing beside the huts, where it was planted for this particular purpose.

The handicraft of the Niam-niam exhibits itself chiefly in ironwork, pottery, wood carving, domestic architecture, and basket-work; of leather-dressing they know no more than others in this part of Central Africa. Their earthenware vessels may be described as of blameless symmetry. They make water-flasks of an enormous size, and manufacture pretty little drinking-cups. They lavish extraordinary care on the embellishment of their tobacco-pipes, but they have no idea of the method of giving their clay a proper consistency by washing out the particles of mica and by adding a small quantity of sand. From the soft wood of several of the *Rubiaceæ* they carve stools and benches, and produce great dishes and bowls, of which the stems and pedestals are very diversified in pattern. I saw specimens of these which were admirable works of art, and the designs



Niam-niam handcraft.

1. Wooden signal drum.
2 and 3. Mandolins.
4. Bedstead.
5. Iron bell.

6. Carved head for the neck of
a mandolin.
7. Carved signal-pipe.
8. Wooden dog-bell.

9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Wooden dishes.
14. Mungala-board.
15. Wooden stool.

of which were so complicated that they must have cost the inventor considerable thought.

As every Niam-niam soldier carries a lance, trumbash, and dagger, the manufacture of these weapons necessarily employs a large number of smiths, who vie with each other in producing the greatest variety of form. The dagger is worn in a sheath of skin attached to the girdle. The lance-tips differ from those of the Bongo in having a *hastate* shape, to use once more the botanical term which distinguishes the *folia hastata* from the *folia lanceolata*. Every weapon bears so decidedly the stamp of its nationality that its origin is discoverable at a glance. All the lances, knives, and dagger-blades are distinguished by blood-grooves, which are not to be observed upon the corresponding weapons of either the Bongo or Dyoor.

Mutual greetings among the Niam-niam may be said to be almost stereotyped in phrase. Any one meeting another on the way would be sure to say "muiyette;" but if they were indoors, they would salute each other by saying "mooke-note" or "mookenow." Their expression for farewell is "minahpatiroh;" and when, under any suspicious circumstances, they wish to give assurance of a friendly intention, they make use of the expression "badya, badya, muie" (friend, good friend, come hither). They always extend their right hands on meeting, and join them in such a way that the two middle fingers crack again; and while they are shaking hands they nod at each other with a strange movement, which to our Western ideas looks like a gesture of repulse. The women, ever retiring in their habits, are not accustomed to be greeted on the road by any with whom they are not previously intimate.

No wooing in this country is dependent, as elsewhere in Africa, upon a payment exacted from the suitor by the father of the intended bride. When a man resolves upon matrimony, the ordinary rule would be for him to apply to

the reigning prince, or to the sub-chieftain, who would at once endeavour to procure him such a wife as might appear suitable. In spite of the prosaic and matter-of-fact proceeding, and notwithstanding the unlimited polygamy which prevails throughout the land, the marriage-bond loses nothing of the sacredness of its liabilities, and unfaithfulness is generally punished with immediate death. A family of children is reckoned as the best evidence and seal of conjugal affection, and to be the mother of many children is always recognised as a claim to distinction and honour. It is one of the fine traits of this people that they exhibit a deep and consistent affection for their wives, and I shall have occasion in a future chapter to refer to some touching instances of this feature in their character.

The festivities that are observed on the occasion of a marriage are on a very limited scale. There is a simple procession of the bride, who is conducted to the home of her future lord by the chieftain, accompanied by musicians, minstrels, and jesters.* A feast ensues, at which all partake in common, although, as a general rule, the women are accustomed to eat alone in their own huts. The domestic duties of a housewife consist mainly in cultivating the homestead, preparing the daily meals, painting her husband's body, and dressing his hair. In this genial climate children require comparatively little care or attention, infants being carried about everywhere in a kind of band or scarf.

The Niam-niam have one recreation which is common to nearly the whole of Africa. A game, known by the Nubians as "mungala," is constantly played by all the people of the entire Gazelle districts, and although perhaps it is not known by the Monbuttoos, it is quite naturalised among all the negroes as far as the West Coast. It is singular that this

* Among the Kaffirs the ceremony of conducting a bride to her new home is observed with much formality.

pastime should be so familiar to the Mohammedan Nubians, who only within the last twenty years have had any intercourse at all with the negroes of the south ; but in all likelihood they received it in the same way as the guitar,* as a legacy from their original home in Central Africa. The Peulhs devote many successive hours to the amusement, which requires a considerable facility in ready reckoning ; they call it "wuri." The game is played likewise by the Foolahs, the Yolofo, and the Mandingo, on the Senegal. It is found again among the Kadje, between the Tsad and the Benwe. The recurrence of an object even trivial as this is an evidence, in its degree, indirect and collateral, of the essential unity that underlies all African nations.

The "mungala" itself † is a long piece of wood, in which two parallel rows of holes are scooped out. Nubian boards have sixteen holes, the Niam-niam have eighteen. Each player has about two dozen stones, and the skill of the game consists in adroitly transferring the stones from one hole to another. In default of a board the game is frequently played upon the bare ground, in which little cavities are made for the purpose.

Having thus detailed their warlike demeanour, their domestic industry, and their common pastime, I would not omit to mention that the Niam-niam are no strangers to enjoyments of a more refined and ideal character than battles and elephant-hunts. They have an instinctive love of art. Music rejoices their very soul. The harmonies they elicit from their favourite instrument, the mandolin, seem almost to thrill through the chords of their inmost nature. The prolonged duration of some of their musical productions is very surprising. Piaggia, before me, has remarked that he believed a Niam-niam would go on playing all day and all night, without thinking to leave off either to eat or to drink ;

* *Vide* vol. i. chap. ix.

† A mungala board is represented in Fig. 14 of the plate illustrating Niam-niam handicraft.

and although I am quite aware of the voracious propensities of the people, I am half-inclined to believe that Piaggia was right.

One favourite instrument there is, which is something between a harp and a mandolin. It resembles the former in the vertical arrangement of its strings, whilst in common with the mandolin it has a sounding-board, a neck, and screws for tightening the strings. The sounding-board is constructed on strict acoustic principles. It has two apertures; it is carved out of wood, and on the upper side is covered by a piece of skin; the strings are tightly stretched by means of pegs, and are sometimes made of fine threads of bast, and sometimes of the wiry hairs from the tail of the giraffe. The music is very monotonous, and it is very difficult to distinguish any actual melody in it. It invariably is an accompaniment to a moaning kind of recitative, which is rendered with a decided nasal intonation. I have not unfrequently seen friends marching about arm-in-arm, wrapt in the mutual enjoyment of their performance, and beating time to every note by nodding their heads.

There is a singular class of professional musicians, who make their appearance decked out in the most fantastic way with feathers, and covered with a promiscuous array of bits of wood and roots and all the pretentious emblems of magical art, the feet of earth-pigs, the shells of tortoises, the beaks of eagles, the claws of birds, and teeth in every variety. Whenever one of this fraternity presents himself, he at once begins to recite all the details of his travels and experiences in an emphatic recitative, and never forgets to conclude by an appeal to the liberality of his audience, and to remind them that he looks for a reward either of rings of copper or of beads. Under minor differences of aspect, these men may be found nearly everywhere in Africa. Baker and some other travellers have dignified them with the romantic name of "minne-singers," but the designation of "hashash" (buf-

foons) bestowed upon them by the Arabs of the Soudan would more fairly describe their true character. The Niam-niam themselves exhibit the despicable light in which they regard them by calling them "nzangah,"* which is the same term as that by which they designate those abandoned women who pollute Africa no less than every civilized country.

The language of the Niam-niam (or, to speak more properly, the Zandey dialect), as entirely as any of the dialects which prevail throughout the Bahr-el-Ghazal district, is an upshoot from the great root which is the original of every tongue in Africa north of the equator, and is especially allied to the Nubio-Lybian group. Although the pronunciation is upon the whole marked and distinct, there are still certain sounds which are subject to a considerable modification, even when uttered by the same individual. The nasal tone which is given to the open sounds of *a* and *e* as they rise from the throat, fix a character upon the articulation that is quite distinct from that of the Bongo, and altogether the dialect is poorer in etymological construction, being deficient in any separate tenses for the verbs; it is, moreover, far less vocalised, and has a cumbrousness which arises from the preponderance of its consonants.

The language is undoubtedly very wanting in expressions for abstract ideas. For the Divinity I found that many interpreters would employ the word "gumbah," which signifies "lightning," whilst, in contrast with this, other interpreters would make use of the term "bongbottumu;" but I imagine that this latter expression is only a kind of a periphrasis of the Mohammedan "rasool" (a prophet, or messenger of God), because "mbottumu" is their ordinary term by which they would designate any common messenger or envoy.

* In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called "ganga," an appellation which would appear to have the same derivation as this Zandey word "nzangah." The "Griots" in Senegambia are held in the same contempt as the Niam-niam minstrels.

Although none of the natives of the Gazelle district may be credited with the faintest conception of true religion, the Niam-niam have an expression of their own for "prayer" as an act of worship, such as they see it practised by the Mohammedans. This word is "borru." When, however, the expression is examined, it is found really to relate to the augury which it is the habit of the people to consult before they enter upon any important undertaking.

The augury to which I have thus been led to refer is consulted in the following way. From the wood of the *Sarcocephalus Russegeri*, which they call "damma," a little four-legged stool is made, like the benches used by the women. The upper surface of this is rendered perfectly smooth. A block of wood of the same kind is then cut, of which one end is also made quite smooth. After having wetted the top of the stool with a drop or two of water, they grasp the block and rub its smooth part backwards and forwards over the level surface with the same motion as if they were using a plane. If the wood should glide easily along, the conclusion is drawn that the undertaking in question will assuredly prosper; but if, on the other hand, the motion is obstructed and the surfaces adhere together—if, according to the Niam-niam expression, a score of men could not give free movement to the block—the warning is unmistakable that the adventure will prove a failure.

Now, since they also use this term "borru" to describe the prayers of the Mohammedans, there seems some reasonable evidence for supposing that they actually regard this rubbing as akin to a form of worship. As often as I asked any of the Niam-niam what they called prayers, they invariably replied by referring to this practice and by making the gesture which I compare to working with a plane. This praying-machine is concealed as carefully as may be from the eyes of the Mohammedans. It was, however, frequently resorted to during the subsequent brief period of warfare,

when my own Niam-niam attendants diligently consulted the oracle, and, as the result was uniformly satisfactory, it contributed not a little to confirm their confidence in my reputation for good luck.

There are other ordeals common to the Niam-niam with various negro nations, and which are considered as of equal or still greater importance. An oily fluid, concocted from a red wood called "bengye," is administered to a hen. If the bird dies, there will be misfortune in war; if the bird survives, there will be victory. Another mode of trying their fortune consists in seizing a cock, and ducking its head repeatedly under water until the creature is stiff and senseless. They then leave it to itself. If it should rally, they draw an omen that is favourable to their design; whilst if it should succumb, they look for an adverse issue.

A Niam-niam could hardly be induced to go to war without first consulting the auguries, and his reliance upon their revelations is very complete. For instance, Wando, our inveterate antagonist, although he had succeeded in rousing two districts to open enmity against us, yet personally abstained from attacking our caravan, and that for no other reason than that his fowl had died after swallowing the "bengye" that had been administered. We awaited his threatened attack, and were full of surprise that he did not appear. Shortly afterwards, we were informed that he had withdrawn in fear and trembling to an inaccessible retreat in the wilderness. Our relief was considerable. It might have fared very badly with us, as all our magazines were established on his route; but, happily, he had gone, and the Niam-niam with whom we were brought in contact stoutly maintained that it was the death of his fowl alone which had deterred him from an assault and had rescued us from entire destruction.

These auguries are consulted likewise in order to ascertain

the guilt or innocence of any that are accused, and suspected witches are tried by the same ordeal.

The same belief in evil spirits and goblins which prevails among the Bongo and other people of Central Africa is found here. The forest is uniformly supposed to be the abode of the hostile agencies, and the rustling of the foliage is imagined to be their mysterious dialogue. Superstition, like natural religion, is a child of the soil, and germinating like the flowers of the field it unfolds its inmost secrets. Beneath the dull leaden skies of the distant North there are believed to be structures haunted by ghosts and spectres. Here the forest, with its tenantry of owls and bats, is held to be the abode of malignant spirits; whilst betwixt both are the Oriental nations, who, without forests, and exposed to the full strength of a blazing sun, fear nothing so much as "the evil eye." Truly it may be averred that the development of superstition is dependent upon geographical position.

In thus recapitulating the general characteristics of the Niam-niam, this chapter necessarily has exhibited some measure of repetition. I will proceed to conclude it, in the same manner as the record of the Bongo, by a few remarks upon the customs of this people with regard to their dead.

Whenever a Niam-niam has lost any very near relative the first token of his bereavement is shown by his shaving his head. His elaborate coiffure—that which had been his pride and his delight, the labour of devoted conjugal hands—is all ruthlessly destroyed, the tufts, the braids, the tresses being scattered far and wide about the roads in the recesses of the wilderness.

A corpse is ordinarily adorned, as if for a festival, with skins and feathers. It is usually dyed with red wood. Men of rank, after being attired with their common aprons, are interred either sitting on their benches, or are enclosed in a kind of coffin, which is made from a hollow tree.

According to the prescriptions of the law of Islam, the

earth is not thrown upon the corpse, which is placed in a cavity that has been partitioned off at the side of the grave. This is a practice mentioned before, and which is followed in many heathen parts of Africa.

Like the Bongo, the Niam-niam bury their dead with a scrupulous regard to the points of the compass; but it is remarkable that they reverse the rule, the men in their sepulture being deposited with their faces towards the east, the women towards the west.

A grave is covered in with clay, which is thoroughly stamped down. Over the spot a hut is erected, in no respect differing externally from the huts of the living, and being equally perishable in its construction, it very soon either rots away through neglect or is destroyed in the annual conflagration of the steppe-burning.

VOL. II.—4

MABENGH *

[illegible]

Note.—The names of reigning princes are printed in italica. The names of deceased princes are marked thus *.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOHAMMED's friendship for Munza. Invitation to an audience. Solemn escort to the royal hall. Waiting for the King. Architecture of the hall. Grand display of ornamental weapons. Fantastic attire of the sovereign. Features and expression. Stolid composure. Offering gifts. *Toilette* of Munza's wives. The king's mode of smoking. Use of the cola-nut. Musical performances. Court fool. Court eunuch. Munza's oration. Monbuttoo hymn. Munza's gratitude. A present of a house. Curiosity of natives. Skull-market. Niam-niam envoys. Fair complexion of natives. Visit from Munza's wives. Triumphal procession. A bath under *surveillance*. Discovery of the sword-bean. Munza's castle and private apartments. Reserve on geographical subjects. Non-existence of Piaggia's lake. My dog exchanged for a pygmy. Goats of the Momvoo. Extract of meat. Khartoomers' stations in Monbuttoo country. Mohammed's plan for proceeding southwards. Temptation to penetrate farther towards interior. Money and good fortune. Great festival. Caesar dances. Munza's visits. The Guinea-hog. My washing-tub.

MUNZA was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the Khartoomers. His storehouses were piled to the full with ivory, the hunting booty of an entire year, which he was eager to exchange for the produce of the north or to see replaced by new supplies of the red ringing metal which should flow into his treasury.

This was Mohammed's third visit to the country, and not only interested motives prompted the king to receive him warmly, but real attachment; for the two had mutually pledged their friendship in their blood, and called each other by the name of brother. During his absence in Khartoom, Mohammed had entrusted the command of the expedition of the previous year to his brother Abd-el-fetah, a Mussulman of the purest water and a hypocritical fanatic, who had greatly offended

the king by his arrogance and unsympathetic reserve. He considered himself defiled by contact with a "Kaffir," and would not allow a nigger to approach within ten steps of his person; he refused to acknowledge either African king or prince, and always designated the ladies of the court as slaves. But Mohammed was entirely different. By all the natives he was known by his unassuming title of "Mbahly," i.e., the little one, and in all his dealings with them he was urbanity itself. He won every heart by adopting the national costume, and attired in his native rokko-coat and scarlet plume, he would sit for hours together over the brimming beer-flasks by the side of his royal *confrère*, recounting to him all the wonders of the world and twitting him with his cannibal propensities. No wonder then that Munza's daily question to Mohammed's people had been: "When will Mbahly come?" and no wonder that, as we were preparing to cross the great river, his envoys had met us with a cordial greeting for his friend. Nor was the attachment all on Munza's side. Immediately on our arrival, Mohammed, leaving the organization of our encampment entirely to the discretion of his lieutenants, had gathered up his store of presents, and hastened to convey them to the king. The greater part of these offerings consisted of huge copper dishes, not destined, however, in this remote corner of the globe to be relegated to the kitchen, but to be employed for the far more dignified office of furnishing music for the royal halls. The interview was long, and our large encampment was complete and night was rapidly approaching before Mohammed returned to his quarters. He came accompanied by the triumphal strain of horns and kettle-drums, and attended by thousands of natives bearing the ample store of provisions which, at the king's commands, had been instantly forthcoming. He announced that I was invited to an audience of the king on the following morning, and that a state reception was to be prepared in honour of my visit. It need

hardly be said that it was with feelings of wonder and curiosity that I lay down that night to rest.

The 22nd of March, 1870, was the memorable date on which my introduction to the king occurred. Long before I was stirring, Mohammed had once more betaken himself to the royal quarters. On leaving my tent, my attention was immediately attracted to the opposite slopes, and a glance at the wide space between the king's palace and the houses of his retinue was sufficient to assure me that unusual animation prevailed. Crowds of swarthy negroes were surging to and fro; others were hurrying along in groups, and ever and anon the wild tones of the kettle-drum could be heard even where I was standing. Munza was assembling his courtiers and inspecting his elephant-hunters, whilst from far and near streamed in the heads of households to open the ivory-mart with Mohammed, and to negotiate with him for the supply of his provisions.

Somewhat impatiently I stood awaiting my summons to the king, but it was already noon before I was informed that all arrangements were complete, and that I was at liberty to start. Mohammed's black body-guard was sent to escort me, and his trumpeters had orders to usher me into the royal presence with a flourish of the Turkish *reveille*. For the occasion I had donned a solemn suit of black. I wore my unfamiliar cloth-coat, and laced up the heavy Alpine boots, that should give importance to the movements of my light figure; watch and chain were left behind, that no metal ornament might be worn about my person. With all the solemnity I could I marched along; three black squires bore my rifles and revolver, followed by a fourth with my inevitable cane-chair. Next in order, and in awestruck silence, came my Nubian servants, clad in festive garments of unspotted whiteness, and bearing in their hand the offerings that had been so long and carefully reserved for his Monbuttoo majesty.

It took us half an hour to reach the royal residence. The path descended in a gentle slope to the wooded depression of the brook, then twisted itself for a time amid the thickets of the valley, and finally once more ascended, through extensive plantain-groves, to the open court that was bounded by a wide semicircle of motley dwellings. On arrival at the low parts of the valley we found the swampy jungle-path bestrewn with the stems of fresh-hewn trees and a bridge of the same thrown across the water itself. The king could hardly have been expected to suggest such peculiar attention of his own accord, but this provisionary arrangement for keeping my feet dry was made in compliance with a kindly hint from Mohammed, who, knowing the nature of my boots, and the time expended in taking them off and on, had thus thoughtfully insured my ease and comfort; moreover, these boots were unique in the African world, and must be preserved from mud and moisture. Unfortunately all these arrangements tended to confirm the Monbuttoo in one or other of their infatuated convictions, either that my feet were like goats' hoofs, or, according to another version, that the firm leather covering was itself an integral part of my body. The idea of goats' feet had probably arisen from the comparison of my hair and that of a goat; and doubtless the stubbornness with which I always refused to uncover my feet for their inspection strengthened them in their suspicion.

As we approached the huts, the drums and trumpets were sounded to their fullest powers, and the crowds of people pressing forward on either hand left but a narrow passage for our procession. We bent our steps to one of the largest huts, which formed a kind of palatial hall open like a shed at both ends. Waiting my arrival here was one of the officers of state, who, I presume, was the master of the ceremonies, as I afterwards observed him presiding over the general festivities. This official took me by the right hand, and without a word conducted me to the interior of the hall.

Here, like the audience at a concert, were arranged according to their rank hundreds of nobles and courtiers, each occupying his own ornamental bench and decked out with all his war equipments. At the other end of the building a space was left for the royal throne, which differed in no respect from the other benches, except that it stood upon an outspread mat; behind this bench was placed a large support of singular construction, resting as it seemed upon three legs, and furnished with projections that served as props for the back and arms of the sitter: this support was thickly studded with copper rings and nails. I requested that my own chair might be placed at a few paces from the royal bench, and there I took up my position with my people standing or squatting behind me, and the Nubian soldiers forming a guard around. The greater number of the soldiers had their guns, but my black squires, who had never before been brought face to face with so mighty a potentate, subsequently confessed to me that their hearts beat fast, and that they could not help trembling to think how a sign from Munza could have brought all our limbs to the spit.

For a considerable time I had to sit waiting in expectation before the empty throne. My servants informed me that Munza had attended the market in his ordinary costume, but that he had been seen to hasten home to his private apartments, where he was now undergoing a process of anointing, frizzling, and bedizening at the hands of his wives, in order that he should appear before me in the imposing splendour of his state attire. I had thus no other alternative than patiently to abide my time; for what could be more flattering to a foreign guest than for a king to receive him in his costliest toilet?

In the interval of waiting there seemed a continuous uproar. The fitful beating of kettle-drums and the perpetual braying of horns resounded through the airy building until it shook again, and mingling with the boisterous strains rose the voices of the assembled courtiers as they whiled away

the time in loud and eager conversation. There was no doubt that I was myself the main cause of their excitement; for although I sat with my back to the majority, I could not be otherwise than quite aware that all eyes were intently fixed upon me. All, however, kept their seats at a respectful distance, so that I could calmly look about me and note down my observations of what I saw.

The hall itself was the chief object that attracted my attention. It was at least a hundred feet in length, forty feet high, and fifty broad. It had been quite recently completed, and the fresh bright look of the materials gave it an enlivening aspect, the natural brown polish of the wood-work looking as though it were gleaming with the lustre of new varnish. Close by was a second and more spacious hall, which in height was only surpassed by the loftiest of the surrounding oil-palms; but this, although it had only been erected five years previously, had already begun to show symptoms of decay, and being enclosed on all sides was dark, and therefore less adapted for the gathering at a public spectacle. Considering the part of Africa in which these halls were found, one might truly be justified in calling them wonders of the world; I hardly know with all our building resources what material we could have employed, except it were whale-bone, of sufficient lightness and durability to erect structures like these royal halls of Munza, capable of withstanding the tropical storms and hurricanes. The bold arch of the vaulted roof was supported on three long rows of pillars formed from perfectly straight tree-stems; the countless spars and rafters as well as the other parts of the building being composed entirely of the leaf-stalks of the wine-palm (*Raphia vinifera*).^{*} The floor was covered with a dark red clay plaster, as firm

^{*} This palm is found in every bank-forest in the Monbutto country, and its leaves vary from 25 to 35 feet in length: the midrib of the leaf (rachis) is of a bright brown colour, and furnishes the most popular building material throughout Central Africa.

and smooth as asphalt. The sides were enclosed by a low breastwork, and the space between this and the arching roof, which at the sides sloped nearly to the ground, allowed light and air to pass into the building. Outside against the breastwork stood crowds of natives, probably the "great unwashed" of the Monbutto, who were unable to obtain places within, and contented themselves with eagerly gazing through this opening at the proceedings. Officials with long sticks went their rounds and kept order among the mob, making free use of their sticks whenever it was necessary; all boys who ventured uninvited into the hall being vigorously beaten back as trespassers.

I had probably been left for an hour, and was getting lost in the contemplation of all the wonders, when a louder sound of voices and an increasing clang of horns and kettle-drums led me to suppose that there was an announcement of the approach of the king; but, no, this was only a prelude. The sovereign was still being painted and beautified by the hands of his fair ones. There was, however, a fresh and increasing commotion near the entrance of the hall, where a number of ornamental weapons was being arranged. Posts were driven into the ground, and long poles were fastened horizontally across them; then against this extemporized scaffolding were laid, or supported crosswise, hundreds of ornamental lances and spears, all of pure copper, and of every variety of form and shape. The gleam of the red metal caught the rays of the tropical noontide sun, and in the symmetry of their arrangement the rows of dazzling lance-heads shone with the glow of flaming torches, making a background to the royal throne that was really magnificent. The display of wealth, which according to Central African tradition was incalculable, was truly regal, and surpassed anything of the kind that I had conceived possible.

A little longer and the weapons are all arranged. The expected king has left his home. There is a running to and

fro of heralds, marshals, and police. The thronging masses flock towards the entrance, and silence is proclaimed. The king is close at hand. Then come the trumpeters flourishing away on their huge ivory horns; then the ringers swinging their cumbrous iron bells; and now, with a long firm stride, looking neither to the right nor to the left, wild, romantic, picturesque alike in mien and in attire, comes the tawny Cæsar himself! He was followed by a number of his favoured wives. Without vouchsafing me a glance, he flung himself upon his unpretending chair of state, and sat with his eyes fixed upon his feet. Mohammed had joined the retinue of his royal friend, and took up his position opposite me on the other side of the king on a stool that was brought for his accommodation. He also had arrayed himself in a suitable dress in honour of the occasion, and now sat in the imposing uniform of a commander of Arnauts.

I could now feast my eyes upon the fantastic figure of the ruler. I was intensely interested in gazing at the strange, weird-looking sovereign, of whom it was commonly reported that his daily food was human flesh. With arms and legs, neck and breast, all bedizened with copper rings, chains, and other strange devices, and with a great copper crescent at the top of his head, the potentate gleamed with a shimmer that was to our ideas unworthy of royalty, but savoured far too much of the magazines of civic opulence, reminding one almost unavoidably of a well-kept kitchen! His appearance, however, was decidedly marked with his nationality, for every adornment that he had about him belonged exclusively to Central Africa, as none but the fabrications of his native land are deemed worthy of adorning the person of a king of the Monbuttoo.

Agreeably to the national fashion a plumed hat rested on the top of his chignon, and soared a foot and a half above his head; this hat was a narrow cylinder of closely-plaited reeds; it was ornamented with three layers of red parrots' feathers,

and crowned with a plume of the same ; there was no brim, but the copper crescent projected from the front like the vizor of a Norman helmet. The muscles of Munza's ears were pierced, and copper bars as thick as the finger inserted in the cavities. The entire body was smeared with the native unguent of powdered cam-wood, which converted the original bright brown tint of his skin into the colour that is so conspicuous in ancient Pompeian halls. With the exception of being of an unusually fine texture, his single garment differed in no respect from what was worn throughout the country ; it consisted of a large piece of fig bark impregnated with the same dye that served as his cosmetic, and this, falling in graceful folds about his body, formed breeches and waistcoat all in one. Round thongs of buffalo-hide, with heavy copper balls attached to the ends, were fastened round the waist in a huge knot, and like a girdle held the coat, which was neatly-hemmed. The material of the coat was so carefully manipulated that it had quite the appearance of a rich *moiré antique*. Around the king's neck hung a copper ornament made in little points which radiated like beams all over his chest ; on his bare arms were strange-looking pendants which in shape could only be compared to drumsticks with rings at the end. Halfway up the lower part of the arms and just below the knee were three bright, horny-looking circlets cut out of hippopotamus-hide, likewise tipped with copper. As a symbol of his dignity Munza wielded in his right hand the sickle-shaped Monbuttoo scimitar, in this case only an ornamental weapon, and made of pure copper.

As soon as the king had taken his seat, two little tables, beautifully carved, were placed on either side of his throne, and on these stood the dainties of which he continually partook, but which were carefully concealed by napkins of fig-bark ; in addition to these tables, some really artistic flasks of porous clay were brought in, full of drinking water.

Such was Munza, the autocrat of the Monbuttoo, with whom I was now brought face to face. He appeared as the type of those half-mythical potentates, a species of Mwata Yanvo or Great Makoko, whose names alone have penetrated to Europe, a truly savage monarch, without a trace of anything European or Oriental in his attire, and with nothing fictitious or borrowed to be attributed to him.

He was a man of about forty years of age, of a fair height, of a slim but powerful build, and, like the rest of his countrymen, stiff and erect in figure. Although belonging to a type by no means uncomely, his features were far from prepossessing, but had a Nero-like expression that told of *ennui* and satiety. He had small whiskers and a tolerably thick beard; his profile was almost orthognatic, but the perfectly Caucasian nose offered a remarkable contrast to the thick and protruding negro lips. In his eyes gleamed the wild light of animal sensuality, and around his mouth lurked an expression that I never saw in any other Monbuttoo, a combination of avarice, violence, and love of cruelty that could with the extremest difficulty relax into a smile. No spark of love or affection could beam forth from such features as his.

A considerable time elapsed before the king looked directly at the pale-faced man with the long hair and the tight black clothes who now for the first time appeared before him. I held my hat in my hand, but no greeting had as yet taken place, for, observing that everyone kept his seat when the king entered the hall, I had done the same, and now waited for him to address me. The wild uproar of the cannibals still continued, and Munza, sitting in a careless attitude, only raised his eyes now and then from their fixed stare upon the ground as though to scan the whole assemblage, but in reality to take stray glances at my person, and in this way, little by little, he satisfied his curiosity. I could

not help marvelling at the composure of this wild African, and wondering where in the world he could have learnt his dignity and self-possession.

At length the monarch began to ask me some questions. They were fluently translated into the Zandey dialect by the chief interpreter, who always played a principal part in our intercourse with the natives. The Niam-niam in their turn rendered the sense to me in Arabic. The conversation, however, was of the most commonplace character, and referred neither to the purpose of my coming nor to the country from which I came. Munza's interrogations brought to my mind the rough reception afforded to Reinhold Forster, the companion of the renowned Captain Cook, by Frederick the Great, who bluntly asked him if he had ever seen a king? "Yes, your Majesty," was the answer, "several; two tame and three savage." Munza appeared extremely anxious to keep up to an Oriental measure the principle of *nil admirari*; nothing could disturb his composure, and even at my subsequent visits, where there was no state ceremonial, he maintained a taciturnity nearly as resolute.

My servants now brought forth the presents I had brought and spread them at the king's feet. These consisted, in the first place, of a piece of black cloth, a telescope, a silver platter, and a porcelain vase; the silver was taken for white iron, and the porcelain for carved ivory. The next gift was a real piece of carved ivory, brought as a specimen to show the way in which the material is employed; there was a book with gilt edges, a gift which could not fail to recall to my mind the scene in which Speke describes Kamrasi's first lesson in the Bible; then came a double mirror, that both magnified and reduced what it reflected; and last, though by no means least, was a large assortment of beads of Venetian glass, including thirty necklaces, composed of thirty distinct pieces, so that Munza was in possession of more than

a thousand separate beads.* The universal principle followed by the Nubians forbade that any presents of firearms should be made to native rulers. Munza regarded all these offerings with great attention, but without committing himself to any audible expression of approval. Not so his fifty wives, who were seated on stools arranged behind his throne; they gave frequent half-suppressed utterances of surprise, and the double mirror was passed admiringly from hand to hand, its contortions eliciting shouts of delight.

There were fifty of these ladies present: they were only the most intimate, or wives of the first rank, the entire number of court ladies being far larger. Except in the greater elegance of their attire, they departed in no way from the fashion of the country, the description of which must be deferred for the present.

After a time Munza turned his attention to his refreshments. As far as I could distinguish them, they consisted of lumps of plantain-meal and tapioca piled on leaves, of dried plantains, and of a fruit which to my surprise I immediately recognised as the cola-nut of the west. From this rosy-shelled kernel the king cut a few slices, and chewed them in the intervals of smoking his tobacco. His pipe, in the shape of an iron stem six feet long, was handed to him by a chibbukchak, who was in attendance for that purpose. Very remarkable was the way in which Munza smoked. To bring himself into the correct position he threw himself far back in his seat, supported his right elbow on the arm-rest, put one leg across the other, and with his left hand received the pipe-stem. In this attitude he gravely took one long inhalation, then, with a haughty gesture, resigned his pipe to the

* I had obtained these little works of art from my Venetian friend Miani, to whom they had been presented some years previously by his fellow-citizens, when he was preparing to undertake a new expedition. The enterprise had failed from no other cause than from the jealousy shown by the Egyptian Government.

hands of his attendant and allowed the smoke slowly to re-issue from his mouth. It is a habit among Turks of rank to smoke thus by taking only two or three inhalations from a pipe handed to them by their servants; but where, again, may I ask, could this cannibal prince have learnt such a custom?

To my request for a cola-nut the king responded by graciously passing me a specimen with his own hand. Turning to Mohammed, I expressed my surprise at beholding this fruit of the far west amongst the Monbutto; I told him of its high value* as a spice in Bornoo, where it is worth its weight in silver, and I went on to say that it confirmed my impression that the Welle was identical with the river of Baghirmy, called the Shary, and that this nut accordingly came to me like a key to a problem that I was seeking to solve. Then again addressing Munza, I made him understand that I knew the fruit, and pointing in the direction of Lake Tsad, I told him that there it was eaten by the great people of the country. I hoped in this way to induce him to give me some information on the subject; but he had made up his mind to be astonished at nothing, nor could I ever even on future occasions draw him into a geographical discussion. All that I could learn was that the cola-nut grew wild in the country, and that it was called "nangweh" by the natives, who were accustomed to chew it in the intervals of their smoking.

The performances that had been prepared for our entertainment now commenced. First of all a couple of horn-blowers stepped forward, and proceeded to execute solos upon their instruments. These men were advanced proficient in their art, and brought forth sounds of such power, compass, and flexibility that they could be modulated from sounds like the roar of a hungry lion, or the trumpeting of

* According to Liebig the cola-nut contains more coffee than the most potent coffee berries.

an infuriated elephant, down to tones which might be compared to the sighing of the breeze or to a lover's whisper. One of them, whose ivory horn was so huge that he could scarcely hold it in a horizontal position, executed rapid passages and shakes with as much neatness and decision as though he were performing on a flute.

Next appeared a number of professional singers and jesters, and amongst them a little plump fellow, who acted the part of a pantomime clown, and jumped about and turned somersaults till his limbs looked like the arms of a windmill; he was covered from head to foot with bushy tufts and pigtails, and altogether his appearance was so excessively ludicrous that, to the inward delight of the king, I burst into a hearty fit of laughter. I called him a court fool, and in many respects he fully deserved the title. I hardly know why the Nubians should have drawn my attention, as though to something quite new, to the wooden Monbuttoo scimitar that he wore in his girdle. His jokes and pranks seemed never-ending, and he was permitted to take liberties with every one, not excepting even Munza himself; and amongst other tricks he would approach the king with his right hand extended, and just as Munza had got hold of it, would start backwards and make off with a bound. A short time before he appeared, some freshly baked ears of maize, the first of the season, had been laid before me; of this delicacy the fool, with the most comical gestures, made me comprehend that he wished to partake; I therefore took up some detached grains, and threw them, one by one, into his open mouth; he caught them with a snap, and devoured them with such comical grimaces, that the performance called forth a roar of applause from the whole assembly.

The next episode consisted of the performances of a eunuch, who formed a butt for the wit of the spectators. How Munza had come into possession of this creature, no one seemed to know, and I could only learn that he was employed

in the inner parts of the palace. He was a fat grotesque-looking figure, and when he sang looked exactly like a grunting baboon; to add to the oddity of his appearance, Munza, as though in mockery of his Nubian guests, had had him arrayed in a red fez, and thus he was the only one in all the immense concourse of natives who had anything foreign in his attire.

But the most important part of the programme was reserved for the end: Munza was to make an oration. Whilst all the audience remained quietly seated on their stools and benches, up jumped the king, loosened his coat, cleared his throat, and commenced his harangue. Of course I could not understand a single word, and a double interpretation would have been worse than useless: but, from what I could see and hear, it was evident that Munza endeavoured to be choice and emphatic in his language, as not only did he often correct himself, but he made pauses after the sentences that he intended to be impressive, to allow for the applause of his auditors. Then the shout of "Ee, ee, tchupy, tchupy, ee, Munza, ee," resounded from every throat, and the musical instruments caught up the strain, until the uproar was truly demoniacal. Several times after this chorus, and as if to stimulate the tumult, Munza uttered a stentorian "brrr--"* with a voice so sonorous that the very roof vibrated, and the swallows fled in terror from their nests in the eaves.

The kettle-drums and horns now struck up a livelier and more rhythmical strain, and Munza assumed a new character and proceeded to beat time with all the solemnity of a conductor. His *bâton* was something like a baby's rattle, and consisted of a hollow sphere of basket-work filled with pebbles and shells, and attached to a stick.†

* It may interest the reader to learn that in the Shamane prayers "brrr---" is synonymous with "hail," and I have little doubt that it here meant some sort of applause, as it was always the signal for the repetition of the hymn in celebration of the glories of Munza.

† A similar contrivance is used on the river Gabon on the West Coast.

The discourse lasted full half an hour, during which time I took the portrait of the king that forms the frontispiece to this book. Hunger at length compelled me to take my leave of the sovereign and retrace my steps to the camp. At parting Munza said to me, "I do not know what to give you in return for all your presents; I am sorry I am so poor and have nothing to offer you." Fascinated by his modesty and indulging the idea that it was only a preface to a magnificent gift worthy of royalty, I replied, "Don't mention that: I did not come for what I could get; we buy ivory from the Turks, and pay them with yellow lead and white iron, and we make white stuffs and powder and guns for ourselves. I only ask for two things: a pig (*Potamochoerus*) and a chimpanzee."

"You shall certainly have them," said Munza; but I was thoroughly deceived, and, in spite of my repeated reminders, neither pig nor chimpanzee ever appeared.

As I left the hall the king commenced a new oration. As for myself, I was so thoroughly fatigued with the noise and tumult, that I was glad to spend the remainder of this memorable day quietly in my tent.

Early on the following morning I was aroused by my people, who begged me to come out and see what the king was sending me. Looking down the road I perceived a group of Monbuttoo, who with a good deal of shouting were lugging up the hill something that I could not make out. Mohammed presently hurried up with the surprising announcement that he had made Munza comprehend that my valuables were all lying out in the open air and exposed to the rain, and that the king was now sending me a house as his first present. I thought at first that he was jesting, but a few minutes sufficed to convince me of the truth of his statement. I then became aware that about twenty natives were carrying on their shoulders the substructure of a small quadrilateral house, while others were following with the

roof. A very short time elapsed before they had mounted the hill and placed the erection in close juxtaposition to my tent. The light structure, woven together with the Spanish reed, looked exactly like a huge hamper, with the roof for a lid. It was about twenty feet long, and sufficiently commodious to contain all my goods, and was especially useful for protecting my paper packets.

I was thus elevated to the rank and enjoyed the rights of a householder among the Monbuttoo, and my intercourse with the natives became more intimate every day. My tent was continually besieged by a host of curious spectators, of whom the more well-to-do brought their benches, and, ranged in rows before the opening, watched in silent eagerness my every movement. Their chiefest interest seemed absorbed in contemplating my person, although many of the utensils and implements that surrounded me must have been quite as strange and incomprehensible to them. These frequent visitors at first afforded me great amusement, and I received them with friendly gestures, and combed my hair and shaved *in conspectu omnium*. Nor was the wonder all on their side; every moment revealed some novelty to myself, and I found full employment in sketching and taking notes. The great difficulty to our intercourse was in not understanding one another's language. Now and then, however, I managed to get hold of some people who could speak the Zandey dialect; and then, with the help of my Niam-niam interpreters, I could ask them questions and get my wishes conveyed to the general multitude.

"Bring your weapons," I would say; "bring your weapons, and the produce of your handicraft, your ornaments and tools, and I will give you beautiful things in return; bring the fruits of your forests, and the leaves of the trees on which they grow: bring the skins and skulls of animals; but above all bring the human skulls that remain over from

your meals: they are of no use to you—bring them, and I will give you copper in exchange.”

I had rarely occasion to repeat my request, but almost before my wish was uttered there was opened a regular curiosity mart; goods were bartered, and a flourishing trade was done.

The stock of bones that was thus brought to me in one day was quite astonishing, and could not do otherwise than remove any lingering hesitation I might have in believing the cannibal propensities of the people. There were piles of every kind—fragments of skulls, and lower jaw-bones from which the teeth had been extracted to serve as ornaments for the neck. The belief seemed to be that I had no intention of dealing otherwise than wholesale. Proofs enough were before me; sufficient, I should suppose, to silence even the most stubborn scepticism. It cost me some trouble to convince the people that my requirements only extended to such skulls as were perfectly uninjured, and that for such only could I be content to pay. For a perfect skull I promised an armlet of copper, but I found that nearly all that were brought to me had been smashed for the purpose of extracting the brains. Out of the two hundred skulls that were produced, I was able to select no more than forty, each of which I carefully labelled for consignment to Europe. The people who brought them professed to give full particulars about them, as to where they had come from, and whether they were male or female—details which of course enhanced the value of the collection. The want of these particulars detracts very much from the worth of many collections of skulls, for, as regards the purposes of comparative ethnology, not much information is to be derived from a skull of which the only explanation is that it came from Brazil or East Africa. The great majority of those which the Monbuttoo brought me had been procured from the people who inhabited the districts south of their own

land, and were the result of the raids that had been made upon them; hardly any were the skulls of the Monbuttoo themselves. The condition in which I received many of the fragments afforded indubitable proof that they had been boiled in water and scraped with knives; and some, I suspect, came straight from the platters of the natives, inasmuch as they were still moist, and had the odour of being only just cooked. A good many had all the appearance of being raked out of old dust-heaps, whilst some few had been found in the streams, and had manifestly been laved by the water.

To those who brought the skulls, I thought it expedient to explain that we wanted them, so that in our far-off country we could learn all about the people who dwelt here, and that we were able, from the mere shape of the head, to tell all about people's tempers and dispositions, their good qualities and their bad; and that for this purpose we gathered skulls together from every quarter of the globe. When the Khartoomers saw that the collection was now going on for a second year, they were only the more confirmed in their belief that I submitted them to a certain process by which I obtained a subtle poison. From the more dense and stupid natives, the idea could not be eradicated that I wanted all the bones for my food. To save the honour of Europe, and in love for the science of which I was the representative, I lavished on these errors an incense unbecomingly the doctrine of Gall's phrenology.

Among those who day after day entered the camp to pay me a visit, were several who had come from a great distance, and amongst them the ambassadors of the neighbouring Niam-niam king, Kanna, whose territories lie to the west and north-west of the Monbuttoo. The district had been part of the kingdom of Keefa, a powerful prince, whose enormous stores of ivory had ever constituted a great attraction for the expeditions of the Khartoomers, though they

seldom travelled as far as his dominions. Keefa, whose surname was Ntikkima, about two years before our arrival, had lost his life in a campaign against the Mabode, a black negro people to the south-west of the Monbuttoo. His four eldest sons had partitioned his extensive power between them, and the largest share of land had fallen to the lot of Kanna, who now sent the deputation to invite Mohammed to visit his country. Mohammed, meanwhile, had already determined that the land of Kanna should be the limit of the southward march of a corps that he detached; but time would not permit us ourselves to make so wide a *détour*. It would occupy the space of several months.

From these Niam-niam envoys I derived several scraps of information about the western regions, which threw some light upon the lower course of the Welle, and of that other stream to the north of it, which, from the union of several streams that rise in the district of Wando, appears very soon to become a large and copious river. Between these two rivers (the Welle and the so-called Bahr-el-Wando, which joins it in Kanna's district) was situated the residence of the deceased Keefa, which, owing to its position, was described in the Arabic way as being on an island. It was represented as being to the N.N.W. of Munza's residence, from which, according to their accounts, it was distant some forty miles.

I made inquiries amongst them about the white man Piaggia, whom the Nubians had brought into the country, and who was affirmed to have visited Keefa's residence; but my respondent replied that, though they had heard of him by report, he had never been into the country; and this corresponded exactly with what had been told me by Ghattas's company that had brought Piaggia as far as Tombo.

All that Piaggia communicated about the Niam-niam was very interesting, and remains uncontested; but he lies open to the reproof of making fictitious routes. It is evident,

moreover, that he arranges the Niam-niam princes in a false order; for example, he makes Keefa follow immediately after Malingde or Malindo; and he only assigns a period of two days for a journey which Antinori, the editor of his reports, has simply stated to be sixty-five miles. I should congratulate a company that could get a party of refractory bearers to accomplish more than a dozen leagues a day, where they would have to cross a dozen brooks and marshes, many of them taking half an hour to accomplish. Not a word, moreover, does he utter about the strange people who reside to the south of the Niam-niam. At Indimma, the population is a very intermingled race, the Niam-niam scarcely making up one-half, and in Keefa's region scarcely making up a minority. Elsewhere Piaggia's observations seemed acute enough, but here he has nothing to remark.

Many as were the visitors that I received at my tent, none awakened greater interest than one of the sons of Munza. The name of this distinguished personage was Bunza, and he was about the lightest-skinned individual that I had here beheld. His complexion could not have been fairer if he had been a denizen of Central Egypt. His hair was equally pale and grizzly; his tall chignon being not unlike a bundle of hemp, and standing in marked contrast to the black tresses which were stretched across the brow. As the hair about the temples does not grow sufficiently long for this purpose, the Monbuttoos are accustomed to use false hair; and as fair heads of hair are somewhat uncommon, false hair to match the original is difficult to purchase. This young man, of whom I was successful in taking a deliberate sketch, exhibited all the characteristics of pronounced albinism, and in truth to a degree which can be often seen in a fair individual of the true Semitic stock, either Jew or Arabian. The eyes seemed painfully affected by light, and had a constant objectless leer; the head, supported on a shrivelled neck, kept nodding with an involun-

tary movement, and whenever it rested it was sure to be in some extraordinary position. Bunza reminded me very vividly of some white twins that I once saw on the Red Sea: they were fishermen of Djidda, and looked as like each other as eggs from one nest. I do not know that I am warranted in drawing any definite inferences from my observation; but I cannot suppress the remark, that to my mind the Monbuttoo have the tokens of a Semitic origin most thoroughly impressed upon their countenance, to which in particular the nose (which does not at all approach to the common negro outline) very much contributes. Bunza's nose was a regular hawk's-bill.

Of the other members of the royal family, several of Munza's wives and his eldest sister came to inspect our camp. This latter woman was repulsive-looking enough, and did not appear to possess any of the warlike virtues attributed to one of her sisters named Nalengbe, who is since dead, but who had once arrayed herself in a man's dress, and entered into personal conflict with the Nubians. This weak woman's vanity made her the laughing-stock of strangers and acquaintances alike; she perambulated the camp, displaying the grossest familiarity with the soldiers. She begged me to make her a present of some lead, which the Nubians from motives of policy had withheld. Lead was still in this region as much of a rarity as though it was just discovered, and produced among them for the first time. Munza's sister used to hammer bright ear-rings out of whatever musket-balls she could procure.

One morning about thirty of the royal ladies came, all together, into the camp to receive the presents which Mohammed had provided for them. They all had comely, youthful, well-knit figures, and were for the most part tall, but much cannot be said in favour of their expression. They emulated each other in the extent of their head-gear and in the profusion with which they adorned the body. Two of

them submitted to have their portraits taken; the whole party sat in a circle, taking up their position during the time that I was sketching the likenesses on the little single-stemmed stools which they had brought with them; when they took their seats they threw their bands across their laps. Some of the group stood out in marked contrast to the rest by their light complexion and fair hair, whilst others approximated very nearly to the colour of *café-au-lait*. When I had finished my drawing, I was anxious to show my appreciation of the ladies' patience, and accordingly offered to present them with some beads, but they at once begged to refuse the proffered necklace, explaining that they were not at liberty to accept presents from any one but "Mbahly" (Abou Sammat). These they had come to fetch, but they had had no orders to receive anything from "Mbarik-pah;" it might arouse suspicion, and suspicion with Munza, the interpreters insisted, was tantamount to death.

However interested I might be, just at first, in the vivacious movements of the people as they thronged around me, it did not take long to make me feel that they were a weariness and a nuisance. On the very next day after our arrival I was obliged to encircle my tent with a thorn-hedge to keep off the press of the inquisitive crowds; full many, however, there were who would not be deterred by any obstacle of this kind; regardless of the obstruction, they penetrated right into my presence. I was interrupted at every moment by these intrusions. My next resource was to have a lot of water dashed over the encroaching rabble, and finding that fail, I fired some trains of gunpowder, and, in the hopes of alarming the natives, I proceeded to set light to a few shells; but even the explosions of these did not take much effect. It seemed as if nothing could keep the curious crowds at a distance, and, at my wits' end what to do, I applied to Mohammed for assistance. He assigned me a guard of men; but even this scheme only partially succeeded;

it answered very well as long as I kept within the bounds of my asylum, but I had only to venture beyond, and I found my retinue as large as ever. The majority of those who harassed me in this way were women, who, by keeping up with me step by step, thoroughly baffled me in all my attempts to botanize; and if perchance I managed to get away into the wood, they would find me out, and trample down the rare flowers I had laboriously collected, till I was almost driven to despair. When thus escorted by about a hundred women I was marching down to the streams in the depth of the valleys, I might indulge the fancy that I was at the head of a triumphal procession, and as often as our path led us through villages and farms the numbers in the train were swollen prodigiously.

Sometimes I was in a better mood, and indulged in a little joke. I had picked up some of their words, and when I shouted one of these out loud it was taken up merrily by the whole party, and passed on from mouth to mouth. Their word "hosanna," for instance, means "it is not," and on one occasion having happened to shout out this, I proceeded for a quarter of an hour while the women around me paused not a moment in making the air resound with the cry "Hosanna." Not unfrequently I would try them with some hard crack-jaw German word, in order to enjoy their conscientious endeavours to reproduce it; but perhaps best of all for producing a characteristic scene was the choice of one of their imitative names of animals, where the appellation is derived from the sounds uttered by the creatures themselves. A goat is in this way called "memmeh." I once seated myself in the centre of a concourse of women, and drew a picture of a couple of goats, and the keynote being given, every time a fresh woman came up she found herself greeted with the universal bleating cry of "Memmeh, memmeh—eh?" "What's the row? What's up?" would be her question. "Memmeh, memmeh" (a goat, a goat), would be all the answer.

These Monbuttoo women, who were so intolerably obtrusive whilst I was amongst other folks, were reserved enough about themselves; however much I might be anxious to investigate their domestic habits, I had but to present myself at the entrances of their huts, and off they were in an instant to the interior, and their doors barred against all intrusion.

There were delicious places where, encircled by the luxuriance of a tropical vegetation, the clear and sparkling pools invited me to the enjoyment of a safe and refreshing bath, an irresistible attraction after the numberless mud baths of the Niam-niam country. Everything seemed to conspire to render the scenery perfect in its bewitching grace; each winding of the brook would be overarched by a magnificent canopy of gorgeous foliage; the waving pendants of the blooming shrubs would shadow the secluded stream; a fantastic wreath of elegant ferns growing up amongst the goodly leaves of the aroidæ and the ginger-plants would adorn the banks; gigantic stems, clothed with accumulated moss, would rise upwards in majestic height and reach down like steps in romantic beauty to the bathing-place. But, alas! even this nook, where the delights of paradise seem almost to be perpetuated, may not be secure from the torment of humanity. It happens here according to the teaching of the poet, that—

"every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Nature is only free and perfect where man comes not with his disturbing foot. In my romantic bathing, this disturbance, ever and again, would come in the shape of some hideous and inquisitive Monbuttoo woman, who had posted herself on the overlooking heights, either to enjoy the picturesque contrast of light and shade, or to gratify her curiosity by getting a peep at my figure through the openings of the foliage as I emerged from the dim obscurity of the wood.

A day seldom passed without my making some addition to

my botanical store. Beside a pathway in the wood I chanced to come upon the great seeds of a legumen which hitherto was quite unknown to me; the natives, when I showed them to them, told me that the name of the plant which bore them was the "morokoh;" after a while I succeeded in getting an entire pod, and recognised it as the produce of the *Entada scandens*, known in the West Indies as the sword-bean. These seed-vessels attain a length of five feet, and are about as wide as anyone could span, the seeds themselves being flat, and having their corners rounded off, and (with the exception of the produce of some palms) are the largest that are known, their flattened sides not unfrequently measuring three square inches. Their size gives them a great capability for resisting the influence of the sea, and they retain their germinating power for many months, so that, carried over by the ocean-currents, they are borne to every quarter of the globe. They have been observed in the arctic regions and on the northern shores of Nova Zembla, and within the tropics they have found their way to both the Indies and to many islands of the Pacific. These enormous beans bear signal witness to the course of the Gulf Stream. Their proper home would seem to be the tropical regions of Africa, as their occurrence in the Monbuttoo lands, equally distant from either ocean, manifestly witnesses. Anxious to investigate where the "morokoh" could really be found, I devoted a special excursion to the search, and went out for a couple of leagues or more in a south-westerly direction from the camp. Crossing several brooks and passing through many a grove of oil-palms, we reached some farmsteads that were erected in a welcome shade. All along our steps we were followed by a group of people who continually fell out and squabbled with the Bongo and other natives belonging to our caravan, but who towards myself personally were as courteous and amiable as could be wished. It might be expected that my bean-pods, five feet long, would be found upon some enormous trees of



MINYAS DE GUINENCO





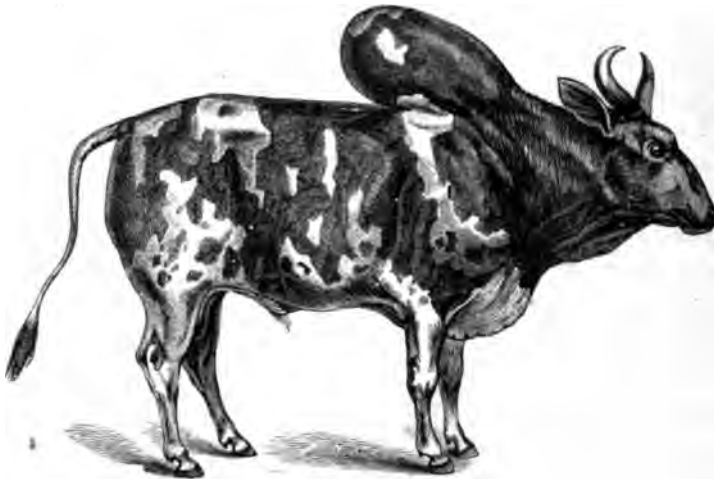
corresponding growth, but in truth the *Entada scandens* is a weak deciduous creeper, which climbs along the underwood that abounds in the depressions of the brooks.

The twenty days of our residence in this interesting spot slipped away only too quickly. There was, however, a series of fresh surprises awaiting me. How I made acquaintance with the Pygmies is a tale that must be told in a later chapter. High festivities in the court of the king—the general summons of the population to take their share in the hunt as often as either buffaloes or elephants came within sight—the arrival of vassals conveying their tribute and making a solemn entrance with their attendant warriors—all these events succeeded each other in rapid order, and gave me ample opportunity of studying the peculiarities of the people from many a different point of view.

I paid repeated visits to the king, sometimes finding him in his granaries engaged in distributing provisions to his officers, and sometimes in the inner apartments of his own special residence. One afternoon I received permission, in company with Mohammed, to inspect all the apartments of the royal castle. The master of the ceremonies and the head-cook escorted us round. Mohammed was already familiar with all the arrangements, and was consequently able to call my attention to anything worthy of particular notice. What I call "the castle" is a separate group of huts, halls, and sheds, which are enclosed by a palisade, and which may be entered only by the king and by the officers and servants of the royal household. All official business is transacted in the outer courts. Trees were planted regularly all round the enclosure, and contributed to give a comfortable and home-like aspect to the whole. Not only did the oil-palms abound, but other serviceable trees were planted round the open space, and declared the permanency of the royal residence, in contradistinction to the fluctuating and unsettled dwelling-places of the Niam-niam chieftains.

I was next brought to a circular building with an imposing conical roof, which was appropriated as the arsenal, and was full of weapons of every variety. Sword-blades and lances were especially numerous, and I was at liberty to make my selection out of them, as the king had chosen in this way to make his return for the presents he had received from me. The superintendents and keepers of the armoury did all in their power to interfere with the freedom of my choice, and as often as I showed my fancy for any piece that was particularly rare, they hesitated before surrendering it, and made a condition that the express consent of the king must be secured before a specimen so *recherché* could be given up. As the result of this exchange of presents, I found my tent loaded with an immense assortment of knives, scimitars, lances, spears, bows, and arrows. At the subsequent conflagration all the wooden portions of these were destroyed, but the metal work was safely remitted to Europe as a proof of the artistic taste and industry of the people.

The same day I had the opportunity of seeing the splendid oxen which Munza had received from the friendly king in



Breed of cattle from the Maoggoo country.

in the south-east, and to which I have already had occasion to refer.* A representation of one of these animals is now introduced, showing the great fat hump, which is larger than any that I had hitherto seen.

* All attempts to elicit any information about the country to the south of their own were quite unavailing; the people were silent as the tomb. Nor did I succeed much better when I came to inquire of King Munza himself. Every inquiry on my part was baffled by the resolute secrecy of African state policy, and the difficulties of the duplicate interpretation gave Munza just the pretext he wanted for circumlocution and evasive replies.

I was most anxious to obtain correct information as to whether the great inland lake to which Piaggia had referred had any real existence in the district or not, and I satisfied myself by positive testimony that the natives had no actual knowledge about it. But it was really very difficult to convey to them any notion whatever of what was intended; there was an utter absence of any simile by which the idea of a lake, a great inland expanse of fresh water, could be illustrated, and the languages of the interpreters (Arabic and Zandey), however copious they might be, were yet inadequate in this particular matter. Neither in Egypt nor in the Egyptian Soudan is there a proper term for a lake. There are indeed the terms "birket," "foola," and "tirra," but these only signify respectively a pond, a rainpool, and a marsh; and Piaggia, who, as I have pointed out, did not actually reach Keefa, spoke only from hearsay, either from the reports of the Nubians, to whom probably some vague information of Baker's discoveries had reached, or by an erroneous conception of the explanation of the natives when they described the "great water," which in reality was the river flowing past Keefa's residence. Monbuttoo and Niam-

* *Vide* vol. i. chap. xiii.

niam alike are entirely incapable of comprehending what is meant by an ocean. Anything contrary to this statement which may have been spread abroad by Khartoom adventurers* I do not think I need hesitate to describe as sheer nonsense or as idle fancy. The tales of steamers and of ships with crews of white men, which are said to have been described by the natives as having come along their rivers, and the stories that pictures of these ships have been found in their dwellings, are doubtless circulated amongst travellers to the Niam-niam lands, but without any assignable grounds.

After much demurring and waiving the question, the king's interpreter did affirm that he knew of such standing water in the country: he pointed towards the direction of the W.S.W., and said its name was "Madimmo," and that it was Munza's own birthplace. The place was called "Ghilly" by the Niam-niam; but when I inquired more accurately, and began to investigate its extent, I received an answer which set my mind entirely at rest that it was as large as Munza's palace!

I nurtured the silent hope that by mentioning certain names that perchance might be known to the Monbutto, I should succeed in breaking down their reserve. I asked the king if he knew anything of the land of Ulegga and of its king Kadjoro, or whether he knew King Kamrasi, whose dominions were beyond the "great water," and behind the mountains of the Malegga; and I pointed at the same time towards the S.E. Then I mentioned Kamrahs, repeating the word and saying "Kamrahs, Kamrahs," in the way that the Nubians are accustomed to do, but both Munza and his interpreter were silent, or proceeded to speak of other matters. But while this conversation was going on, a significant look that Munza gave his interpreter did not escape my notice,

* Compare Dr. Ori's letter to the Marquis Antinori in the '*Bollettino della Soc. Geogr. Ital.*,' i. p. 184.

and very much confirmed my suspicion that he was not altogether unacquainted with Kamrasi.

Some time afterwards Munza, in the most off-hand way, complained that I had not given him enough copper. Knowing the general expectations of an African king, I was only surprised that he had not urged his demand before. He reminded me of the quantity of copper that Mohammed had given him : " Mohammed," he said, " is a great sultan ; but you are also a great sultan." When I reminded him that I did not take any of his ivory, he seemed to acquiesce in my excuse ; but he very shortly afterwards sent me some messengers to request that I would make him a present of the two dogs which I had brought with me. They were two common Bongo curs of very small growth, but by contrast with the mean breed of the Monbuttoo and the Niam-niam they were attractive enough to excite the avidity of Munza. He had never seen dogs of such a size, and did not want them as dainty morsels for his table, but really wished to have them to keep. However, he had long to beg in vain ; I assured him that the creatures had grown up with me till I was truly fond of them ; they were, as I told him, my children ; I was not disposed to part with them at any price, and might as well be asked to give the hair off my head. But my representations had no effect upon Munza ; he had made up his mind to have the dogs, and did not pass a day without repeating his request, and enforcing it by sending fresh relays of presents to my tent. Nothing, however, moved me. At last some slaves, both male and female were sent, and the sight of these suggested a new idea. I resolved to give way, and to exchange one of my dogs for a specimen of the little Akka people. Munza acceded at once, and sent me two of them. He could not suppress his little joke. " You told me," said he, " not long since, that the dogs were your children ; what will you say if I call these my children ?"

I accepted the smallest of the Akka, a youth who might

be about fifteen years of age, hoping to be able to take him to Europe as a living evidence of a truth that lay under the myth of some thousand years. I shall give a fuller account of this little specimen of humanity in the chapter that will be devoted to the subject of the Pygmies.

It had, moreover, become high time for me to give way, and not to put the cannibal ruler's patience to too severe a test. The exchange which had been effected restored me to the royal favour, and a prohibition which had been issued to the natives, warning them not to have any transactions with me by selling me produce or curiosities, was withdrawn. I received now such quantities of ripe plantains that I was able to procure an abundance of plantain-wine, an extremely palatable and wholesome drink, which is obtained after being allowed to ferment for twenty-four hours.

During this time Mohammed had begun to find that the supply of provisions was growing inadequate, and that he would find some difficulty in meeting the necessities of his numerous bearers and of his heterogeneous caravan. He accordingly resolved to make a division of the entire company, and to send a detachment back to Izingerria beyond the Welle, where they might get corn and other supplies. In my own case, I was obliged to do without proper bread; no eleusine was to be had, and I was reduced to a flat tough cake made of manioc and plantain-meal.

As no cattle-breeding is practised among the Monbuttoo, I should have been fastened down to a uniform diet of vegetables if I had not happened to be aware that in the last raid against the Momvoo a very considerable number of goats had been driven into the country. I induced the king to become my agent for getting me some of them, and sent him three large copper bracelets, weighing about a pound, for every goat that he would let me have. In this way I gradually obtained about a dozen fat goats, and more beautiful creatures of the I kind had never seen since I had left

Khartoom. They were of two different breeds: one of them was singularly like the Bongo race, which has been before described, and which are remarkable for the long hair that hangs from their neck and shoulders; the other differed



Goat of the Momvoo.

from any type that I had previously seen in having an equally-distributed drooping fleece, which serves as a covering for its short-haired extremities, and in its nose being very considerably arched. The ordinary colour of these graceful animals is a uniform glossy black. They are fed almost exclusively upon plantain leaves, a food which makes them thrive admirably. When I had got half-a-dozen of them together I had them all killed at once. I had the flesh all taken off the bones, the sinews carefully removed, and then made my bearers, who had no other work to do, mince it

up very fine upon some boards. The entire mass was next thrown into great vessels and boiled; it was afterwards strained, and when it had got cold it was freed from all fat and finally steamed until it was a thick jelly. The extract of meat obtained in this way had to serve throughout our return journey, and in the sequel proved a very remunerative product. It was not liable to decomposition, and its keeping so well made it an excellent resource in time of want and postponed the evil day of our actual suffering from hunger.

Besides the company of Mohammed Aboo Sammat, there were two other companies that for some years had been accustomed to carry their expeditions into the Monbuttoo country, namely, Agahd's and that of the Poncets, which was afterwards transferred to Ghattas. It was a matter of arrangement that these should confine their operations to the eastern districts, where Degberra was king. At their departure they always left a small detachment in charge to look after their business interests and to prevent any competition. Agahd's and Poncet's soldiers had been left in the garrisons in the districts that were under the control of Degberra's generals, Kubby and Benda, and they were only too glad to embrace the present chance (as we were only distant a two days' journey) of coming to see their friends and acquaintance from Khartoom and to hear the news.

To all appearance the Monbuttoo air agreed excellently with them all, which is more than can be said of those who reside in some of the northern Seribas. They had wives and families in the country, and made no other complaint than that their life was somewhat lonely and monotonous and their food so different to what they had been accustomed to; but what the fanatical Mohammedans had most readily to avow was that they really held the natives in admiration and respect, notwithstanding their intense detestation of the cannibalism which was attributed to them. Mohammed also left some of his people in the neighbourhood of Munza; and these strangers

had permission to erect Seribas and to plant their environs with sweet-potatoes, manioc, and plantains. Their prerogative extended no further than this, and they had no authority at all over the natives; however small might be their number in any place (sometimes not a score of men altogether) they were sure to be sufficient to restrain the inhabitants from any attempt at surprise. The African savages are not like the American Indians, who are always prepared to see a few of their party killed at the outset, provided that they can only make sure of ultimate success and can get their plunder at last; not that the Africans underrate the advantage they possess in the superiority of their numbers, nor that they entertain too high an estimate of the bravery of the Nubians, but they are conscious that no attack could be ventured without one or two of them having to pay the penalty of their lives. No one is ready for his own part to run the risk of his own being the life that must be sacrificed; and thus it happens that the prospect of a few deaths is sufficient to deter them, though they might be reckoned by thousands, from making that outbreak which their numerical strength might guarantee would be finally successful.

As soon as Mohammed became aware that he had got to the end of the king's store of ivory he began to think of his ways and means, and contemplated pushing on farther to the south and opening a new market for himself. With the greatest enthusiasm I entered into his design, and taking up his cry, "To the world's end!" I added, "Now's the time, and onward let us go!" But, unfortunately, there were insuperable obstacles in the way. In the first place, there was the decided opposition of the king, who entertained the very natural belief that the farther progress of the Khar-toomers to the south would interfere with his monopoly of the copper trade; and in the next place there was the impossibility of Mohammed being able, without Munza's co-operation, to procure sufficient provisions for so arduous

an undertaking. To put the former difficulty to the test, Mohammed despatched his nephew with the conduct of an expedition just sufficiently large to venture the attempt. For three days this expedition pressed on, until upon the River Nomayo, an affluent of the Welle, they reached the residence of one of Munza's sub-chieftains, whose name was Mummery. Halfway upon their route they had rested at the dwelling-place of another chieftain, named Nooma. Both Mummery and Nooma, it should be said, were Munza's own brothers; but neither of them would venture to open commercial transactions of any kind without the express orders of the king, and consequently the expedition had to return at once and leave its object unaccomplished.

The disappointment was very keen: it was a bitter grief to see one's most cherished projects melt thus thoroughly away. Nor was it a much smaller matter of regret that Mohammed felt himself obliged to curtail even our few weeks' residence with Munza; he might propose, indeed, to advance to the south from the eastern portion of the Monbuttoo country, but that was a project that was little likely to be accomplished.

For a long period I held fast to my intention of remaining behind alone in Munza's country with the soldiers who would be left in charge of the Seriba; and I indulged the fascinating hope that I should find an opportunity of penetrating into that farther south which I longed so earnestly to investigate; but my protector would not acquiesce in this for a moment, nor did any of my own people show an inclination to support my wishes. It was very doubtful if we could be relieved during the next year, or the year after, if at all; my resources even now were hardly enough to take me home again; the wherewithal for further enterprise was altogether wanting; if I should entrust my collection, which I had so laboriously gathered, to the care of others, there was every risk of its becoming wet and even spoiled; the

prospect, too, of penetrating into the interior under the escort of the Monbuttoos themselves was not altogether inviting: I should only have accompanied their plundering raids, where I should have been compelled to be a daily witness of their cruelties and cannibalism; thus upon serious deliberation I was driven to the conviction that my scheme was not feasible.

No doubt a very different vista would have opened itself before me into the untraversed interior of the continent if I had chanced to be one of those favoured travellers who have unlimited command of gold. But fortune and money appear, with regard to African travel, to stand very much in the same relation to one another as force and time in physics; what you gain in one, you lose in the other. The fortunate and healthy travellers, like Karl Mauch and Gerhard Rohlfs, have generally been very limited in their means; whilst rich travellers, such as the Baron von der Decken and Miss Tinné, have succumbed to difficulties, sickened, or died. Any expedition that was fitted out with a liberality proportioned to that of Speke's would have been capable of advancing from Munza's to the south, defiant of opposition; enough copper would have neutralised the resistance of the king; if force could be opposed by force, and threats could be met by threats, the native princes would all declare themselves to be friends, and, like Mtesa and Kamrasi, would meet them with open arms. But, as I say, the resources must be adequate. With two hundred soldiers from Khartoom, not liable to fever, and capable of existing upon food of any sort, and who were up to all the dodges and chicaneries of the African chieftains, any one could penetrate as far as he chose. If I had possessed 10,000 dollars in my purse, or had them invested properly in Khartoom, I would have guaranteed to bring my leader on to Bornoo. The sum would have sufficed to keep his soldiers up to their duty; and under those circumstances I

should have been master of the situation, and Mohammed would have had means to get as much ivory as he could desire.

These intimations may suffice to show that, in my opinion, with the aid of the Khartoom merchant companies, access could be had to the remotest parts of the continent without any exorbitant outlay of money; but conditions so favourable for prosecuting the work as those which then fell to my lot, I fear may be long before they occur again.

Munza's visits made a diversion in our camp life. The finest entertainment, however, which chanced to occur was the celebration of the victory which Mummery had obtained over the Momvoo. As the produce of his successful raid, Mummery brought the due contributions of ivory, slaves, and goats, to lay before the feet of the king, and the occasion was taken to institute a festival on the grandest scale. In consequence of Munza's establishment being already taxed with the entertainment of so many strangers, Mummery only stayed for a single night. The morning after his arrival was appointed for the feast.

The early part of the day was cold and rainy; but quite betimes, the shouts and cheers that rang around the camp told us that the rejoicing already had begun. Towards mid-day the news was brought that the excitement was reaching its climax, and that the king himself was dancing in the presence of his numerous wives and courtiers. The weather was still chill and drizzly; but, putting on a long black frock-coat as being the most appropriate costume for the occasion, I bent my steps to the noble saloon, which resounded again with the ringing echoes of uproarious cheers and clanging music. The scene that awaited me was unique. Within the hall there was a spacious square left free, around which the eighty royal wives were seated in a single row upon their little stools, having painted themselves in honour of the occasion with the most elaborate care; they were

1
1
1
1
1

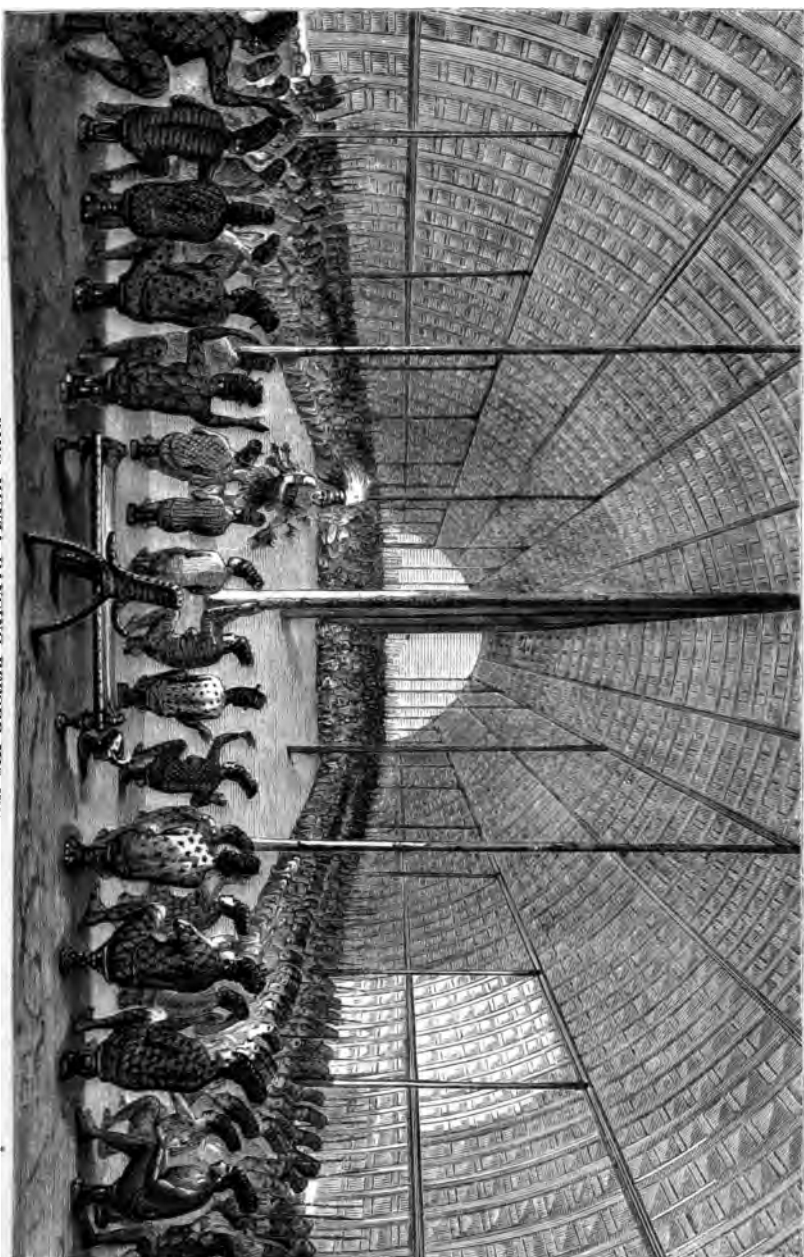
And I am not
A man of words.

And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words.

And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words.

And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words.

And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words,
And I am not
A man of words.



KING MUNZA DANCING BEFORE HIS WIVES.

!

applauding most vigorously, clapping their hands with all their might. Behind the women stood an array of warriors in full accoutrement, and their lines of lances were a frontier of defence. Every musical accompaniment to which the resources of the court could reach had all been summoned, and there was a *mélée* of gongs and kettle-drums, timbrels and trumpets, horns and bells. Dancing there in the midst of all, a wondrous sight, was the king himself.

Munza was as conspicuous in his vesture as he was astounding in his movements. It is ever the delight of African potentates on occasions of unusual pomp to present themselves to their subjects in some new aspect. Munza's opportunities in this way were almost unlimited, as he had a house full of skins and feathers of every variety: he had now attired his head in the skin of a great black baboon, giving him the appearance of wearing a grenadier's bearskin; the peak of this was dressed up with a plume of waving feathers. Hanging from his arms were the tails of genets, and his wrists were encircled by great bundles of tails of the guinea-hog. A thick apron, composed of the tails of a variety of animals was fastened round his loins, and a number of rings rattled upon his naked legs. But the wonder of the king's dress was as nothing compared to his action. His dancing was furious. His arms dashed themselves furiously in every direction, though always marking the time of the music; whilst his legs exhibited all the contortions of an acrobat's, being at one moment stretched out horizontally to the ground, and at the next pointed upwards and elevated in the air. The music ran on in a



wild and monotonous strain, and the women raised their hands and clapped together their open palms to mark the time. For what length of time this dance had been going

on I did not quite understand; I only know that I found Munza raving in the hall with all the mad excitement which would have been worthy of the most infatuated dervish that had ever been seen in Cairo. Moment after moment it looked as if the enthusiast must stagger, and, foaming at the mouth, fall down in a fit of epilepsy; but nervous energy seems greater in Central Africa than among the "hashishit" of the north: a slight pause at the end of half an hour, and all the strength revived; once again would commence the dance, and continue unslackened and unwearied.

So thoroughly were the multitude engrossed with the spectacle that hardly any attention at all was given to my arrival, and a few who noticed it did not permit themselves to be diverted from the enjoyment of their pleasure. I had an opportunity, therefore, of transferring the scene to paper, and of finishing a sketch which embraces its prominent features.

But above the tumult of men was heard the tumult of the elements. A hurricane arose, with all the alarming violence of tropical intensity. For a little while the assembly was unmoved and disposed to take no notice of the storm; but soon the wind and pelting rain found their way into the openings of the hall; the music ceased, the rolling drum yielding to the thunder; the audience in commotion rose, and sought retreat; and in another instant the spectacle was over; the dancing king was gone.

The floods of rain compelled me to remain upon the spot, and I took advantage of the opportunity to make an undisturbed inspection of the other and larger hall, which was situated just opposite to the one in which I was. A low doorway led into the edifice, which was 150 feet long and not less than fifty feet high; it was lighted only by narrow apertures, and the roof was supported on five rows of columns. On one side of it was a wooden partition which divided off

from the spacious edifice a small apartment, where the king was accustomed, according to the imperial wont of altering the sleeping-place, occasionally to pass the night. An enormous erection, ponderous enough to support an elephant, served as a bedstead; on each side of this were several posts each encircled by forged iron rings that could not weigh less than half a hundredweight. In this royal bed-chamber I noticed a large number of barbarous decorations, and I observed that the pillars and the timberwork were rudely painted with numerous geometrical designs, but that the artists seem to have had only three colours at their command; blood-red, yellow-ochre, and the white from dogs' dung (*album græcum*).

Munza twice honoured our camp with a visit. His majesty's approach was announced long beforehand by the outcries of the teeming people that thronged along his way. On entering the encampment he found the German flag waving from a tall flagstaff that I had erected in the immediate proximity of my tent; he was curious to know what it meant, and had to be initiated into the object of a national symbol, and to be informed of the tragical experiences of King Theodore in Abyssinia. It was a great relief to me that he did not require to enter either into my tent or into a large grass-shed which had been recently erected for me. Altogether the monarch displayed much less covetousness than I had reason to expect. Recognising this moderation on his part, I endeavoured to entertain him by showing him my collection of pictures, and amongst others I submitted to him the one of himself in the copper habiliments which he had worn on the day of our first audience. They were the only portraits he had ever seen, and his astonishment was very great; the play of the muscles of his face displayed the interest he took, and, according to the custom of the land, he opened his mouth quite wide, and covered it with his open hand, betraying thereby his surprise

and admiration. I had afterwards to open my bosom for his inspection, and when I turned up my shirt-sleeves, he could not suppress a cry of amazement. The interview ended, as such visits generally did, by his expressing a wish, with which I had not the least intention to comply, that I would take off my boots.

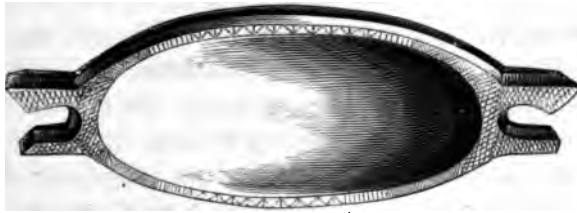
The date of our departure was now drawing near, and yet neither my promised chimpanzee nor guinea-hog* had appeared. About the chimpanzee the truth was that not one could be found in the district, which was far too densely populated, and where the woods upon the river-banks were very light and traversed by frequent pathways; but with regard to the guinea-hog it was quite different; they were to be found in the nearest environs of the royal residence, and, if only Munza had been inclined, he could have redeemed his promise and secured me a specimen without difficulty. He left me, consequently, to get one, if I could, for myself; but this, to a novice in the chase, was more easily said than done, and I had to ramble in the thickets, rifle in hand, under the vain hope that I might secure a specimen.

Only once, and that was just when evening was coming on to close a cloudy day, and a drizzling mist was giving obscurity to the woods, I caught sight of one of these animals. Its red bristly head and long pointed ears peered out from behind the prostrate stem of a great tree, and I was just concluding that it was within gunshot, when at the very instant two of my native attendants were seen beside it rolling on the ground and bleeding at the nose. My people were not remarkable for pluck, and nothing would induce

* The Guinea-hog (*Potamochoerus penicillatus*) is called "Napezzo," or "fat," by the Monbuttoo, and its flesh is considered very choice. These animals, which are not nearly so wild as the wart-hogs (the blabark of the South African Boërs), and are indeed capable of being partially tamed, are found throughout the tropical regions of Africa, from the west coast to Zanzibar. Burton met with them in Ugogo. In early times they were already introduced into Brazil.

them to a second venture with the beast. Thus I was compelled to renounce my hope of getting a guinea-hog.

During the earlier hours of the morning and the later hours of the afternoon, I spent the time, day after day, in continual excursions, which enabled me to add to the novelties of my collection. The middle of the day I devoted to the necessary supervision of my household. The periodic washing day had come, and I was at a loss to find a washing-tub that could contain the accumulated linen. Mohammed's ingenuity came once more to my aid. He borrowed King Munza's largest meat-dish for my use. A lordly dish it was; more like a truck than an article for the table. It was five feet long, and hewn from a single block.



King Munza's dish.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MONBUTTOO. Previous accounts of the Monbuttoo. Population. Surrounding nations. Neglect of agriculture. Products of the soil. Produce of the chase. Forms of greeting. Preparation of food. Universal cannibalism. National pride and warlike spirit. Power of the sovereign. His habits. The royal household. Advanced culture of the Monbuttoo. Peculiarities of race. Fair hair and complexion. Analogy to the Fulbe. Preparation of bark. Nudity of the women. Painting of the body. *Coiffure* of men and women. Mutilation not practised. Equipment of warriors. Manipulation of iron. Early knowledge of copper. Probable knowledge of platinum. Tools. Wood-carving. Stools and benches. Symmetry of water-bottles. Large halls. Love of ornamental trees. Conception of Supreme Being.

It was in December 1868, just before starting from Khartoom, that I received, in a somewhat circuitous way, the first intelligence of a people called the Monbuttoo, who were said to dwell to the south of the Niam-niam. Dr. Ori, the chief official physician at Khartoom, in a letter to the Marquis Antinori, had detailed all the most recent particulars of the ivory traffic in the remote districts south of the Gazelle, and had specially referred to the transactions of Jules Poncet. These particulars were published without much delay in the journal of the Geographical Association of Paris; and I chanced to find Dr. Ori's letter quoted entire in the Italian Geographical Society's 'Bolletino,' which was transmitted to me by the Marquis Antinori himself just before I was setting out on my expedition.

Although the intelligence conveyed by Ori and Poncet failed utterly in giving either clearness or consistency to the confused depositions of those ignorant and uninformed men

who had been their authorities, it still had the intrinsic merit of enlarging the domain of geographical knowledge by some matters of fact which it was reserved for me individually to confirm by my own observation. It laid down as facts, first, that to the south of the Niam-niam territory there is a river flowing towards the west;* secondly, that this river is not tributary to the Nile; and, thirdly, that its banks are populated by a race quite distinct from the ordinary negro race, its inhabitants being of a brownish complexion, and exhibiting a grade of civilization which is considerably in advance of what is elsewhere found in Central Africa.

These people were designated by the name of the Monbuttoo, and by the ivory traders they were known as Gurrugurroo, a definition that is derived from an Arabic word which refers to their universal habit of piercing their ears.

No sooner had I really reached the district of the Gazelle than I discovered from my conversation and intercourse with the leaders of the ivory traffic that the Monbuttoo were regarded as holding a very peculiar and prominent place. Their country never failed to furnish a theme of general praise. It was declared to be prolific in ivory; it was profuse in its natural products; the pomp of its sovereign was unrivalled; but, above all, the skill of its people, in the fabrication alike of their weapons for war and their utensils for peace, was assumed to be so striking that they were comparable to the denizens of the civilized west, and that in some respects the Franks themselves did not surpass them in the exercise of an æsthetic faculty.

That I might succeed in making my way onwards to the territory of this problematical people, naturally became more and more my impatient and ardent desire; and it will

* Houglin in 1863, had received intelligence of what was now proved. viz. that the same district from which issues the White Nile also gives birth to another stream, called by him the river of Sena.

readily be understood how eagerly I recognised Aboo Sammat as offered by a propitious fate to be the conductor upon whom I might rely for being introduced to a closer view of this undefined race, which might be likened in a way to a nebula in the geographical firmament. Very much I now rejoice at being in a position to submit, upon the evidence of my own observation, a somewhat detailed account of this race, who may be described as constituting a sort of remote island of humanity. Surrounded as it is by the waves of fluctuating nationalities, it is, as it were, an "*ultima Thule*" of geographical research; or perhaps still more appropriately it might be likened to a boulder thrown up from a lower formation, and exhibiting a development of indigenous culture, entirely different to what can be witnessed all around.

The territory of the Monbuttoo, as it lies in the heart of Africa, does not cover an area of more than 4000 square miles, but the ratio of the census of its population is hardly exceeded by any region of the entire continent. Estimating the density of the people by the districts through which we travelled, and observing that cultivated farms followed upon cultivated farms, without a barren spot between, I suppose that there are at least 250 inhabitants to the square mile, which would give an aggregate population of about a million. The position of the country is embraced very nearly between the parallels of 3° and 4° north latitude, and 28° and 29° east longitude from Greenwich. To the north of the country there is a large river, usually copious in its stream, called the Keebaly. This is joined by the Gadda, which flows from the south-east. After the junction it is known as the Welle, and has a breadth of about 800 feet, whilst never, even in the driest season, does its depth diminish to less than fifteen feet. It proceeds to the west along the southern portion of the adjoining Niam-niam district, and being swollen by the accession of numerous tributaries from the southern districts of the Monbuttoo, it very rapidly assumes its large dimen-

sions. Beyond a doubt it is the upper course of the most easterly of the two arms which, after they have united in Baghirmy, flow onwards under the name of the Shary, that river to which Lake Tsad owes its existence.

There are two chieftains who, with regard to the extent of their dominions and the numerical strength of their armed forces (for their sway extends far beyond the populous districts of the Monbuttoo), may well be designated as kings. They have partitioned the sovereignty between them: the eastern division being subject to Degberra, the western division is governed by Munza, who exercises a much more powerful control; he is a son of King Tikkiboh, who had once enjoyed the undivided rule over the entire Monbuttoo land, but thirteen years previously had been murdered by his brother Degberra.

Sub-chieftains or viceroys are distributed over various sections of the country, and these are accustomed to surround themselves with a retinue and state little inferior to those of the kings themselves. In Munza's realms there are three of these dignitaries; viz. his brothers Izingerria, Mummery, and Nooma; subordinate to Degberra there are his four sons, Kubby, Benda, Koopa, and Yangara.

The country of the Niam-niam constitutes the northern and north-western boundaries of the Monbuttoo. This comprises the territories of Kanna and Indimma, sons of the once powerful Keefa, and, farther on, the district of Malingde or Marindo, which approaches in an easterly direction more towards the territory of Wando; each of these countries are, however, separated by wildernesses which it requires two days to cross. The southern limits of the Monbuttoo are enclosed, as it were, by a semicircle of typical negroes, whom they embrace in the comprehensive definition of "Momvoo," a disdainful epithet implying the extremity of their degradation. From this category we are possibly called upon to exclude in this quarter (as perchance in every other region

of Africa) those isolated races of dwarfs, familiarly known as "Pygmies," of which the Akka, who reside in the S.S.W., and have their abodes close to the confines of the kingdom of Munza, may be quoted as examples. The bulk of this apparently thickly-peopled race is subject to independent chieftains, but there is one section which is tributary to Munza in so far as this, that it makes its contributory payments to Mummery, as being Munza's vicegerent. According to the depositions of some Nubians who have been stationed for some years past in the Monbuttoo country, the language of the Babuckur is found to be spoken among the Momvoo. To support their opinion the Nubians affirm that women-slaves brought from Babuckur have always been found able to converse with the natives of the land just to the south of the Monbuttoo; a circumstance which is not without its signification as explaining the most recent migration of nations into this part of Africa. Since the two *enclaves* of Babuckur on the eastern boundaries of the Niam-niam appear only to be removed from each other by an interval of sixty miles and to be hemmed in by hostile neighbours, the fact, taken in connection with the above, may serve to demonstrate that Monbuttoo and Niam-niam alike must have been advancing in an easterly direction.

Munza's neighbours towards the south-west and south of the kingdom of Kanna are the Mabohde. This is a people whom Keefa, Kanna's father (known also as Ntikima), was accustomed to harass in war till he met with his own death. Farther on towards the S.S.W., and separated from Munza by the Mabohde and the Akka, there lies the district of the Massanza, a tribe which is held in subjection by the formidable hand of Kizzo. To the south and south-east are found the Nemeigeh, the Bissangah, and the Domondoo, tenanted a mountainous region, which not improbably is the western declivity of that important mountainous formation to which Baker, in describing the north-west of Lake Mwootan, has

referred under the name of the Blue Mountains. The settlements of the Domondoo are the usual limits to which the Monbuttoo are accustomed to carry their plundering expeditions. Some Nubian soldiers who had been quartered in the country of Munza, and who had accompanied him in some of his marauding exploits have given a description of the general mountainous character of the land, and, moreover, have asserted that goats, which are known neither to the Niam-niam nor to the Monbuttoo, have been captured there in great numbers. The Babuckur also, notwithstanding the frequent incursions which their neighbours, ever greedy of animal diet, have made upon their over-populated and oppressed communities, are always found in possession of herds of goats so numerous that they might be described as inexhaustible. Many days' journey to the south and south-east of Munza's realms are the abodes of the Maoggoo, over whom a powerful sovereign exercises his authority, and who seems to have various transactions with Munza, if I may judge from the splendid cattle which had been sent him as a present. Maoggoo is not improbably the same as Malegga, the appellation of a people, which appears in Baker's map to the west of the Blue Mountains in an extensive country (Ulegga), of which it is affirmed that the king is named Kadjoro, and that the population is especially devoted to the breeding of cattle.

Having thus minutely taken a survey of the surroundings of the Monbuttoo, we may in the next place proceed to observe the land itself, regarding it as the substance of the picture of which we have been thus accurately surveying the background.

The Monbuttoo land greets us as an Eden upon earth. Unnumbered groves of plantains bedeck the gently-heaving soil; oil-palms, incomparable in beauty, and other monarchs of the stately woods, rise up and spread their glory over the favoured scene; along the streams there is a bright

expanse of charming verdure, whilst a grateful shadow ever overhangs the domes of the idyllic huts. The general altitude of the soil ranges from 2500 to 2800 feet above the level of the sea: it consists of alternate depressions, along which the rivulets make their way, and gentle elevations, which gradually rise till they are some hundred feet above the beds of the streams below. Upon the whole the soil may be described as far more diversified in character than what is observed in the eastern parts of the Niam-niam land. Like it is there, it is rich in springs, wherever there are depressions, and in a network of "desaguaderos" associated with the watercourses, and justifies the comparison that has already been suggested between the entire land and a well-soaked sponge, which yields countless streams to the pressure of the hand. Belonging to one of the most recent formations, and still in process of construction, the ferruginous swamp-ore is found very widely diffused over the Monbutto country, and indeed extends considerably farther to the south, so that the red earth appears to be nearly universal over the greater part of the highlands of Central Africa. The denser population has involved, as might be expected, more frequent clearances for the sake of establishing plantain groves, and promoting the culture of maize and sugar-canes, but even here in the deeper valleys trees grow to such a prodigious height, and exhibit such an enormous girth, that they could not be surpassed by any that could be found throughout the entire Nile region of the north. Beneath the imposing shelter of these giants other forms grow up and, rising one above another, stand in mingled confusion. In its external and general aspect the country corresponds with the description which Speke has given of Uganda; but the customs of the inhabitants of that land, their difference of race, and their seclusion from all intercourse with commercial nations stamp them as being of a type which is of a very contrasted character.

It seems almost to involve a contradiction to give the title of agriculturists to a people whose existence indeed depends upon the easy securing of fruits and tubers, but who abhor the trouble of growing cereals. Sorghum and penicillaria, which are the common food of the population in nearly the whole of Central Africa, are absolutely uncared for amongst the Monbuttoo; eleusine is only grown occasionally, and maize, which is known as "Nendoh," is cultivated quite as an exception in the immediate proximity of their dwellings, where it is treated as a garden vegetable. The growth of their plantain (*Musa sapientium*) gives them very little trouble; the young shoots are stuck in the ground after it has been slackened by the rain; the old plants are suffered to die down just as they are; and this is all the cultivation that is vouchsafed. In the propagation of these plantains, however, the Monbuttoo have a certain knack of discrimination for which they might be envied by any European gardener: they can judge whether a young shoot is capable of bearing fruit or not, and this gives them an immense advantage in selecting only such shoots as are worth the trouble of planting. They are not accustomed to bestow any greater amount of attention to the planting either of the tubers of their manioc (or cassava), their sweet-potatoes, their yams (neggoo), or their colocasiae. A very limited range of plants embraces the whole of what they take the pains to cultivate, and that cultivation is all accomplished in the narrowest bounds. The entire produce is summed up in their sesame (mbellemoh), their earth-nuts, their sugar-canes, and especially their tobacco. The Virginian tobacco is the only kind which is seen; it is called Eh Tobboo, its name betraying its American origin. The *Nicotiana rustica*, which is of such constant growth amongst the Bongo, Dyoer, and Dinka, is here entirely unknown.

Very little care, moreover, is given to the sugar-cane, which may be found amid the thinned woods that line the

banks of the rivers. It is grown only as a sort of delicacy, being found nowhere in any great quantity, and its quality is far from good. One ever-thriving supply, which is of the utmost importance for maintaining the population, is provided in all the valleys by the cassava (*Manihot utilissima*); but the cultivation of the sweet-potato, equally extensive as it is, demands a somewhat more careful attention, requiring the sunny soil of the upper slopes of the valleys above the line of the plantain groves and nearest to the edge of the depressions. Both sweet-potatoes and cassava here attain the very fullest standard of perfection, as far as regards either size or quality. But the staple food is the plantain. This is generally gathered in a green condition, dried, ground into meal, and boiled to a pulp; occasionally, but not so often, it is dried after it is ripe for the purpose of being kept for a longer time. Very few countries of the world have a soil and atmosphere so favourable as these for insuring the abundant produce of this serviceable plant. The fruit when dried is a very choice delicacy, but any fermented drink made from plantains I found to be almost unknown among the Monbuttoo.

Owing to the thorough isolation in which the Monbuttoo have lived, holding no intercourse with Mohammedan or Christian nations, the art of weaving has not found its way amongst them, and woven material is consequently nowhere to be seen. Their clothing, as in many other regions of Central Africa, is contributed by their fig-trees (*Urostigma Kotschyana*), of which the bast from the bark, with the help of some strings and shreds, is worked into a substantial and enduring fabric. Hardly a hut can be seen that is without its own fig-trees, which, however, will not grow without due care and cultivation. The people are never known to wear skins attached to their girdles after the fashion of the Niam-niam; the only occasion when skins are worn being when they are made into a fancy dress for dancers.

On the south of the Welle there is a very extensive cultivation of the oil-palm (*Elaeis guineensis*). It is a tree that, although common to the west coasts, has not hitherto been found in the Nile districts, and consequently, like the colanuts, which the wealthier of the Monbuttoo are accustomed to chew, it yields a significant evidence of the western associations of the people.

Every kind of cattle-breeding is quite unfamiliar to them; and if the common little dogs known as the "nessy" of the Niam-niam breed be excepted, and no account be taken of their poultry ("naahle"), the Monbuttoo may be said to be absolutely without domestic animals at all. In a half tame state they keep, as I have said, the potamochoerus, which is their only representative of the swine family. From the marauding excursions with which they harass their southern neighbours they bring back a prodigious number of goats, but they make no attempt to rear them for themselves. Their hunting expeditions supply them with meat enough for their requirements, their taste leading them to give the preference to the flesh of elephants, buffaloes, wild boars, and the larger kinds of antelopes. Although the denseness of the population precludes any such increase of game of this kind as is universal in the more northern and less cultivated regions of Central Africa, yet the yield of their chase would be adequate for their own wants, because the abundance of their supply at certain seasons is very great, and they have the art of preserving it so that it remains fit for food for a very considerable time. With this fact capable of being substantiated, it is altogether a fallacy to pretend to represent that the Monbuttoo are driven to cannibalism through the lack of ordinary meat. To judge from Munza's accumulated store of ivory, which is the result of the combined exploits of all the men in his dominions capable of bearing arms, the provision of elephant's meat alone must be sufficient to keep his people amply supplied. Nor should

the immense quantity of poultry be forgotten, as there is hardly a dwelling that is not conspicuous for having a considerable stock, in the same way as dogs are an especial subject of interest amongst the Niam-niam, who have a very decided partiality for the flesh of that animal.

A bird very common in the Monbuttoo lands is the grey parrot (*Psittacus erythacus*), which is very eagerly sought by the natives, who not only adorn their heads with the bright red feathers from its tail, but have a great relish for its savoury flesh. Other sport in the way of birds is very inconsiderable, guinea-fowls, francolins, and bustards being all caught by means of snares. The herb *Tephrosia Vogelii** is cultivated in nearly all the villages for the purpose of poisoning fish, and the fish that is thus secured forms a very considerable addition to the supply of food.

Whilst the women attend to the tillage of the soil and the gathering of the harvest, the men, except they are absent either for war or hunting, spend the entire day in idleness. In the early hours of the morning they may be found under the shade of the oil-palms, lounging at full length upon their carved benches and smoking tobacco. During the middle of the day they gossip with their friends in the cool halls, which serve for general concourse, where they may be seen gesticulating vigorously to give full force to their sentiments. The action of the Monbuttoo in speaking exhibits several singularities, as, for example, their manner of expressing astonishment by putting their hand before their open mouth, very much in the same way as a person does when he is gaping. It has been said that the North American Indians have the habit of showing their surprise in the same way.

Smiths' work, of course, is done by the men, but, just as in most other parts of Africa, the pottery is exclusively made by

* A kindred plant of this genus is used in the West Indies, where the practice is generally carried on by slaves.

the women. Wood-carving and basket-weaving are performed indifferently by either sex. Musical instruments are not touched by the women.

The universal form of salutation consists in holding out the right hand, and saying, "Gassiggy," and at the same time cracking the joints of the middle fingers.

The two sexes conduct themselves towards each other with an excessive freedom. The women in this respect are very different to the modest and retiring women of the Niam-niam, and are beyond measure obtrusive and familiar. Their inquisitiveness was a daily nuisance: they watched me into the depth of the woods, they pestered me by flocking round my tent, and it was a difficult matter to get a bath without being stared at. Towards their husbands they exhibit the highest degree of independence. The position in the household occupied by the men was illustrated by the reply which would be made if they were solicited to sell anything as a curiosity, "Oh, ask my wife: it is hers."

Polygamy is unlimited. The daily witness of the Nubians only too plainly testified that fidelity to the obligations of marriage was little known. Not a few of the women were openly obscene. Their general demeanour surprised me very much when I considered the comparative advance of their race in the arts of civilization. Their immodesty far surpassed anything that I had observed in the very lowest of the negro tribes, and contrasted most unfavourably with the sobriety of the Bongo women, who are submissive to their husbands and yet not servile. The very scantiness of the clothing of the Monbuttoo women has no excuse.

Carved benches are the ordinary seats of the men, but the women generally use stools that have but one foot. On the occasion of paying a visit or going to a public gathering the men make their slaves carry their benches for them, as it is their custom never to sit upon the ground, not even when it has been covered with mats.

The care that is given to the preparation of their food is very considerable, and betokens their higher grade of culture. The unripe produce of the plantain and the manioc, that in all districts is ready at their hand without the trouble of cultivation, make good the deficiency of corn. Their mode of treating manioc is precisely the same as that which is adopted in South America for the purpose of extracting the fine flour called tapioca. For spices they make use of the capsicum, the malaghetta pepper, and the fruit of two hitherto unspecified Solanæ, and for which I regret that I cannot select the name of *S. anthropophagorum*, because it has been already assigned to the "cannibal salad" of the Fiji Islanders. The flavour of both these is very revolting, having a detestable twang, something between a tomato and a melongena. Mushrooms are also in common use for the preparation of their sauces.

All their food is prepared by the admixture of oil from the oil-palms. In its unpurified condition when first expressed from the pods, this oil is of a bright red colour, and of a somewhat thick consistency; for a few days it has an agreeable taste, which, however, soon passes off and leaves a decided rankness. By subsequently submitting the kernels to fire, a coarse, inflammable oil is obtained, which is used for the purpose of lighting their huta. Other vegetable oils in considerable abundance are obtained from earth-nuts, from sesame, and from the fruit of a forest-tree, *Lophira alata*. From the fat thick bodies of the male white ants they boil out a greasy substance which is bright and transparent, and has a taste perfectly unobjectionable.

But of most universal employment amongst them is human fat, and this brings our observations to the climax of their culinary practices. The cannibalism of the Mfonbuttoo is the most pronounced of all the known nations of Africa. Surrounded as they are by a number of people who are blacker than themselves, and who, being inferior to them in culture,

are consequently held in great contempt, they have just the opportunity which they want for carrying on expeditions of war or plunder, which result in the acquisition of a booty, which is especially coveted by them, consisting of human flesh. The carcases of all who fall in battle are distributed upon the battle-field, and are prepared by drying for transport to the homes of the conquerors. They drive their prisoners before them without remorse, as butchers would drive sheep to the shambles, and these are only reserved to fall victims on a later day to their horrible and sickening greediness. During our residence at the court of Munza the general rumour was quite current that nearly every day some little child was sacrificed to supply his meal. It would hardly be expected that many opportunities should be afforded to strangers of witnessing the natives at their repast, and to myself there occurred only two instances when I came upon any of them whilst they were actually engaged in preparing human flesh for consumption. The first of these happened by my coming unexpectedly upon a number of young women who had a supply of boiling water upon the clay floor in front of the doorway of a hut, and were engaged in the task of scalding the hair off the lower half of a human body. The operation, as far as it was effected, had changed the black skin into a fawny grey, and the disgusting sight could not fail to make me think of the soddening and scouring of our fatted swine. On another occasion I was in a hut and observed a human arm hanging over the fire, obviously with the design of being at once dried and smoked.

Incontrovertible tokens and indirect evidences of the prevalence of cannibalism were constantly turning up at every step we took. On one occasion Mohammed and myself were in Munza's company, and Mohammed designedly turned the conversation to the topic of human flesh, and put the direct question to the king how it hap-

pened that just at this precise time while we were in the country there was no consumption of human food. Munza expressly said that being aware that such a practice was held in aversion by us, he had taken care that it should only be carried on in secret.

As I have said, there was no opportunity for strangers to observe the habits of the Monbuttoo at their meals; the Bongo and Mittoo of our caravan were carefully excluded by them as being uncircumcised, and therefore reckoned as "savages;" whilst the religious scruples of the Nubians prevented them from even partaking of any food in common with cannibals. Nevertheless the instances that I have mentioned are in themselves sufficient to show that the Monbuttoo are far more addicted to cannibalism than their hunting neighbours, the Niam-niam. They do not constitute the first example of anthropophagi who are in a far higher grade of culture than many savages who persistently repudiate the enjoyment of human flesh (for example, the Fiji Islanders and the Caribs). It is needless for me to recount the personal experiences of the Nubian mercenaries who have accompanied the Monbuttoo on their marauding expeditions, or to describe how these people obtain their human fat, or again to detail the processes of cutting the flesh into long strips and drying it over the fire in its preparation for consumption. The numerous skulls now in the Anatomical Museum in Berlin are simply the remains of their repasts which I purchased one after another for bits of copper, and go far to prove that the cannibalism of the Monbuttoo is unsurpassed by any nation in the world. But with it all, the Monbuttoo are a noble race of men; men who display a certain national pride, and are endowed with an intellect and judgment such as few natives of the African wilderness can boast; men to whom one may put a reasonable question, and who will return a reasonable answer. The Nubians can never say enough in praise of their faithfulness

in friendly intercourse and of the order and stability of their national life. According to the Nubians, too, the Monbuttoo were their superiors in the arts of war, and I often heard the resident soldiers contending with their companions and saying, "Well, perhaps you are not afraid of the Monbuttoo, but I confess that I am; and I can tell you they are something to be afraid of."

As matter of fact the Khartoom traders, some years before, had had a definite trial of arms with the Monbuttoo. Shortly after his accession to power, Munza had of his own accord and by a special embassy invited Aboo Sammat to extend his transactions beyond their present limits in Nganye's and Wando's territories; but in the year previous to that, the Nubian merchant Abderahman Aboo Guroon, having endeavoured to penetrate from Keefa's dominions into the Monbuttoo lands, was attacked on the north of the Welle by the Monbuttoo forces, who opposed his advances upon their territory. At that time Munza's father, Tikkiboh, had absolute rule in the country, and the achievements of his daughter Nalengbe, a sister of the present king, are still fresh in the memory of all who were present at the engagement; eye-witnesses gave me detailed accounts of the exploits of this veritable Amazon, whom I have mentioned before, and related how, in full armour, with shield and lance, and girded with the rokko apron of a man, she had with the utmost bravery led on the Monbuttoo troops, who then for the first time came in contact with firearms; and how her exertions were attended with a complete success, the adventurous Aboo Guroon being repulsed with considerable loss, and forced to relinquish altogether his design of entering the country. In the following year, 1867, Mohammed Aboo Sammat, invited as I have said by the king himself, crossed the Welle and entered the land, thus, as the first explorer, opening the ivory traffic under conditions of peace, which have ever since remained undisturbed.

The Monbuttoo potentates enjoy far higher prerogatives than the Niam-niam princes. Besides the monopoly of the ivory, they claim regular contributions from the products of the soil. In addition to his special body-guard, the sovereign is always surrounded by a large body of courtiers, whilst an immense number of civil officers and local overseers maintain the regal dignity in the various districts of the land. Munza's three brothers, Izingerria, Mummery, and Nooma, perform the office of viceroys, and subordinate to these again are sub-chieftains of the second rank, who act as governors of provinces.

Next in rank to the sub-chieftains, who are generally chosen from the numerous members of the blood-royal, are the principal officers of state. These are five in number: the keeper of the weapons, the master of the ceremonies, the superintendent of the commissariat stores, the master of the household to the royal ladies, and the interpreter for intercourse with strangers and foreign rulers.

Munza never leaves his residence without being accompanied by several hundred of his retinue, and, in token of his dignity, a long array of drummers, trumpeters, and couriers with great iron bells are sent at the head of the procession. The harem, in the immediate vicinity of the palace, consists of eighty young ladies, who, with their attendant women slaves, occupy as many huts erected in a wide circuit within the precincts of the royal halls and private apartments. Enclosed by these huts is a smooth and ample space, where the well-trodden red soil offers a fine contrast to the deep green foliage of the groups of oil-palms, bread-fruit trees, cordiæ, trumpet-trees, urostigmæ, and other trees by which it is overshadowed. Munza holds his councils in the great halls, and on appointed days grants audiences, and occasionally gives one of the extensive feasts, accompanied by music and dancing, such as I have already described.

The royal ladies are divided, according to age and seniority, into several classes. The elder matrons occupy villages built for their accommodation at some distance from the residence; their number amounts to several hundred, for, besides his own wives of the first and second rank, Munza is bound to maintain the ladies inherited from his father, and even those belonging to a deceased brother. It is a long-established African custom that at a king's death his wives should fall to the lot of his successor, who never fails to annex to their number a large addition of his own. In the sixteenth century the wives of the King of Loango were estimated at 7000.

Whenever at night the king leaves his private apartments to visit his wives, the place re-echoes with the shouts of the courtiers, accompanied by the strains of horns and kettle-drums, and then, too, may be heard the Monbuttoo hymn, "Ee, ee, Munza, tchuppy, tchuppy, ee." Eye-witnesses state that the king spends his night in passing from one hut to another, and without favouring any with an especially long visit; but it is all done in the strictest *incognito* and under cover of the darkness. Besides the courtiers, the royal household contains many officials appointed to some peculiar functions; there are the private musicians, trumpeters and buglers, whose productions testify to the time and labour spent upon their acquirement; there are eunuchs and jesters, ballad-singers and dancers, who combine to increase the splendour of the court, and to provide general amusement for the festal gatherings. In addition to these there are numbers of stewards, who keep order at the feasts and, by a free use of their rods, restrain the over-obtrusiveness of the younger portion of the community.

The king's private residence consists of a group of several large huts, each of which is set apart for one of his daily occupations. They are enclosed, like a Seriba, with a palisade, and are shaded by plantations of well-kept trees. The

king's food is always prepared by one of his wives, who perform the office in turn, relieving one another at stated intervals. Munza invariably takes his meals in private; no one may see the contents of his dish, and everything that he leaves is carefully thrown into a pit set apart for that purpose. All that the king has handled is held as sacred, and may not be touched; and a guest, though of the highest rank, may not so much as light his pipe with an ember from the fire that burns before his throne. Any similar attempt would be considered as high treason and punished with immediate death.

As permission was granted me to inspect the internal arrangements of the royal palace, I was enabled to survey the whole series of huts. The king's wardrobe alone occupied several apartments. In one room I saw nothing but hats and feathers of every variety, special value being laid upon the red parrot's feathers, which are arranged in great round tufts. One hut there was in which were suspended whole bundles of the tails of civets, genets, potamochoeri, and giraffes, together with skins and thousands of the ornaments with which the king was accustomed to adorn his person. I observed also long strings of the teeth of rare animals captured in the chase. One ornament alone, composed of more than a hundred lions' fangs, must have been a costly heirloom to be handed on from father to son. For the first time I noticed the skin of the *Galago Demidoffi*, an animal hitherto only observed in Western Africa.

A little conical hut that I was shown was set apart for the privacy of the royal retiring-room, the only one of the kind that I came across in Central Africa. The internal arrangements of this corresponded exactly with what is seen in Turkish dwelling-houses. The heathen negroes are generally more observant of decorum in this respect than any Mohammedan.

On another occasion I was conducted through the armoury.

The store of weapons consisted principally of lances tied up in bundles of two or three hundred together, which in times of war are distributed amongst the fighting force; there are also piles of the knives and daggers which are borne by Monbuttoo warriors. In the same place were kept the ornamental weapons which are used for decorating the royal halls on festal occasions, consisting for the most part of immense spears, formed head and shaft alike of pure copper, and brightly polished.

The storehouses and corn-magazines were provided with well-made, water-tight roofs, and Munza spends a portion of every day in the several sections, personally superintending the distribution and arrangement of the stores.

From these details it may be understood that the Monbuttoo are subject to a monarchical government of an importance beyond the average of those of Central Africa; and in its institutions it appears to correspond with the descriptions of negro empires long since passed away. The half mythical empire of the powerful Mwata Yanvo, whose influence doubtless extended to the Monbuttoo lands, may probably, to a certain extent, have furnished the type for many of these institutions; but be that as it may, it is an indisputable fact, that of all the known nations of Central Africa the Monbuttoo, without any influence from the Mohammedan or Christian world, have attained to no contemptible degree of external culture, and their leading characteristics prove them to belong to a group of nations which inhabit the inmost heart of Africa, and which are being now embraced in the enlarging circle of geographical knowledge. The land of the Manuyema, visited by Livingstone, and the states of Mwata Yanvo, frequented by the Portuguese traders, form respectively the south-western and south-eastern limits of this immense territory, which in area surpasses half of European Russia.

In turning to the national characteristics of this people,

we may notice in the first place that their complexion is of a lighter tint than that of almost all the known nations of Central Africa, the colour of whose skins may be generally compared, by the test I have frequently adopted, to that of ground coffee. It is this peculiarity that forms a great distinction between the Monbuttoo and the Niam-niam, whose complexions are more aptly compared to cakes of chocolate or ripe olives. It cannot fail to strike the traveller as remarkable that in all African nations he meets with individuals with black, red, and yellow complexions, whilst the yellow tribes of Asia and the copper-coloured tribes of America each present a remarkable uniformity in the tone and shade of their skins. Barth observed this peculiarity among the Marghi; he noticed some individuals who were quite black, and others who had coppery-red skins, or, as he describes them, rhubarb-coloured, in distinction to those which he compared to *chocolat-au-lait*. His supposition that an intermingling of races was the sole cause of this diversity of complexion is probably incorrect, as it appears to be a characteristic of the entire series of the red-skinned races of Africa.

The Monbuttoo have less fulness of muscle than the Niam-niam, without, however, any appearance of debility. The growth of the hair is much the same, and the beard is much more developed than that of the Niam-niam.

But there is one special characteristic that is quite peculiar to the Monbuttoo. To judge from the hundreds who paid visits of curiosity to my tent, and from the thousands whom I saw during my three weeks' sojourn with Munza, I should say that at least five per cent. of the population have light hair. This was always of the closely frizzled quality of the negro type, and was always associated with the lightest skins that I had seen since leaving Lower Egypt. Its colour was by no means like that which is termed light hair amongst ourselves, but was of a mongrel tint mixed with grey, suggesting the comparison to hemp. All the individuals who

had this light hair and complexion had a sickly expression about the eyes, and presented many signs of pronounced albinism; they recalled a description given by Isaac Vossius, in his book upon the origin of the Nile, of the white men he saw at the court of the King of Loango: he says that "they were sickly-looking and wan of countenance, with their eyes drawn as though they were squinting." In the previous chapter I have given a similar description of one of the king's sons, named Bunza. This combination of light hair and skin gives the Monbuttoo a position distinct from all the nations of the northern part of Africa, with the single exception of the various inhabitants of Morocco, amongst whom fair-haired individuals are far from uncommon.

It has been already observed that in the physiognomical form of the skull the Monbuttoo in many ways recall the type of the Semitic tribes; and they differ from the ordinary run of negroes in the greater length and curve of the nose. All these characteristics betoken an affinity with the Fulbe, and as such the Monbuttoo may probably be included amongst the "Pyrrhi Æthiopes" of Ptolemy. This would, however, be but a vague supposition if it were not supported by the fact that the Fulbe are of eastern origin, although in later times a portion of them have made a retrograde movement from Senegal towards the east. It must be understood that I do not intend by these remarks to offer a bridge for carrying over Eichwaldt's theory of the affinity of the Fulbe with the Malays, nor do I intend by such a national migration to add a new link to what he declares to be accomplished in the case of Meroe. Barth considers these Fulbe to be the issue of a double cross, a cross between the Arabs and people of Barbary on the one hand and the people of Barbary and the negroes on the other. This hypothesis, I believe, would also hold good for the Monbuttoo; but altogether it is a question too vague to be capable of being here discussed with any justice.

On account of the loss of the specimens of the Monbuttoo dialect, which I had been at great pains to collect by means of a double interpretation, I am unfortunately not in a position to give much information about the dialect; this much, however, I can confidently assert, that it is a branch of the great African language-stock north of the equator, the greater number of the words belonging to the Nubio-Lybian group.

Still more than in the colour of their skin do the Monbuttoo differ from the neighbouring nations in dress and habits. This appears to be a land where costume is a settled matter of rule, for the uniformity of attire is as complete as it is rapidly becoming under the sway of fashion in all classes of our civilized communities.

Weaving is an art unknown to the Monbuttoo, and their only material for clothing is obtained from their fig-tree (*Urostigma Fotschyana*), the bark of which is found to be in a condition most serviceable for the purpose when the trunk of the tree is about as thick as a man's body; the stem is then peeled in rather a remarkable manner: two circular incisions, four or five feet apart, are made right round the trunk, and the bark is removed entire; strange to say, this does no harm to the tree, and in a very short time a peculiar growth or granulation takes place along the edge of the upper incision in the form of little fibres, which gradually descend along the bare cambium or sap-wood, until the tree is once more clothed with a fresh layer of bast. The only explanation that can be offered for this unusual growth is, that in peeling off the bark the entire layer of bast is not removed, but that some portion of it is left hanging to the wood and retains its vitality.* In the course of three years the fresh growth is complete, and the bark is in a con-

* Livingstone observed a similar new growth of bark on the trunk of the Baobab (*Adansonia*), from which the Matabele obtain material for cord.

dition to be again removed ; apart from this property, the rearing of these rokkō-trees would not compensate the natives for the trouble of planting them.

The rokkō bark has a certain resemblance to the lime-bast, which is so important an article of commerce in Russia ; its fibres, however, have not the smoothness and paper-like



Monbutoo Warriors.

thinness of the Russian product, but are tangled together almost like a woven mass. By a partial maceration and a good deal of thrashing, the Monbuttoo contrive to give the bark the appearance of a thick close fabric, which, in its rough condition, is of a grey colour, but after being soaked in a decoction of wood acquires a reddish-brown hue, something like ordinary woollen stuff. Fastened at the waist with a girdle, one of these pieces of bark is sufficient to clothe the body, from the breast downwards to the knees, with a very effective substitute for drapery. Representations of two Monbuttoo warriors in full array are given in the illustration on the preceding page.

The women go almost entirely unclothed; they wear nothing but a portion of a plantain leaf or a piece of bark about the size of their hand attached to the front of their girdle; the rest of the body being figured in laboured patterns by means of a black juice obtained from the Blippo (*Randia malleifera*). Whilst the Dinka women, leaving perfect nudity as the prerogative of their husbands, are modestly clothed with skins—whilst the Mittoo and Bongo women wear their girdle of foliage, and the Niam-niam women their apron of hides, the women of the Monbuttoo—where the men are more scrupulously and fully clothed than any of the nations that I came across throughout my journey—go almost entirely naked.

Whenever the women go out, they carry across their arm a strap which they lay across their laps on sitting down. These straps or scarfs are about a foot wide, and something like a saddle-girth, and as they form their first attempt in the art of weaving, their texture is of the clumsiest order, possessing no other recommendation than their durability; they are appropriated to the further use of fastening infants to their mothers' backs.

The women can be distinguished from one another by the different tattooed figures running in bands across the breast



Monbuttoo Woman.

and back along the shoulders; their bodies, moreover, are painted with an almost inexhaustible variety of patterns. Stars and Maltese crosses, bees and flowers, are all enlisted as designs; at one time the entire body is covered with stripes like a zebra, and at another with irregular spots and dots like a tiger; I have seen these women streaked with veins like marble, and even covered with squares like a chess-board. At the great festivals every Monbuttoo lady endeavours to outshine her compeers, and accordingly applies all her powers of invention to the adornment of her person. The patterns last for about two days, when they are carefully rubbed off, and replaced by new designs.

Instead of this paint the men use a cosmetic prepared from pulverised cam-wood, which is mixed with fat and then rubbed over the whole body. The Niam-niam also make use of this powder, but they only apply it partially in irregular

spots and stripes, delighting especially in staining the breast and face to increase the ferocity of their appearance.

The *coiffure* of both sexes is alike; the hair of the top and back of the head is mounted up into a long cylindrical chignon, and being fastened on the inside by an arrangement made of reeds, slopes backwards in a slanting direction. Across the forehead, from temple to temple, the hair is twisted in thin tresses, which lie one above another, closely fitting the skull until they reach the crown of the head. Their own hair is rarely long enough to form this portion of the head-gear, but the deficiency is supplied from the heads of those who have fallen in war, or, since hair is an article of traffic in the country, it is procured from the market. On the top of their chignon, the men wear the cylindrical straw-hats so often referred to. These are without brims, square at the top and circular at the base, and are adorned either with the tufts of red parrots' feathers that I have described in connection with Munza's wardrobe,* or with the long feathers of eagles and falcons. The hats, of course, follow the slanting directions of the chignon, and fall back diagonally to the head, and altogether the head-gear is remarkably similar to that worn by the Ishogo women in Western Africa. The Monbuttoo women wear no hat on their chignon, which is merely adorned with little hair-pins attached to combs made of the quills of the porcupines.

These details may suffice to give a fair notion of the external appearance of the Monbuttoo, and if I add that their only mutilation of the body consists in boring the inner muscle of the ear for the purpose of inserting a bar about the size of a cigar, I shall have described all the fashions in vogue, from which no individual is at liberty to make marked deviation. They neither break out their lower incisor teeth,

* In the woodcut which represents Munza in full dress, the king has one of these clusters of feathers in his hat.

like the black nations on the northern river plains, nor do they file them to points, like the Niam-niam, neither do they imitate the Bongo and Mittoo women in the hideous perforation of their lips; and I repeat that, if we except circumcision (which, according to the accounts of all the heathen negroes of equatorial Africa, is a custom they have received from their remote ancestors), this piercing of the ear is the one disfigurement of nature adopted by the Monbuttoo. On account of this practice the Khartoomers have conferred upon them the title of "Gurrugurroo," *i.e.* "pierced," in contradistinction to the Niam-niam in general, Niam-niam being, as I have said, the term used by the inhabitants of the Soudan for all cannibals, irrespective of their various nationalities.

The weapons of the Monbuttoo warriors are very numerous. Besides shields and lances, they also carry bows and arrows, a combination somewhat rare amongst Africans; in addition



WEAPONS OF THE MONBUTTOO.

Figs. 1-9. Various scimitars. 10. Large dagger. 11. Hand-knife, for carving and peeling bark.

to these, in their girdles they are accustomed to have scimitars with curved blades like sickles, whilst some of them use daggers and spatular knives of all shapes and sizes. The projectiles which are in use among the Niam-niam are not included in the equipment of the Monbuttoo.

Since the Monbuttoo dwell upon the red ferruginous soil extending from the Gazelle over a large portion of Central Africa, it may be assumed as a matter of course that smiths' work must play an important part in their industrial pursuits, and indeed in this respect they excel all other natives of the districts through which I travelled, whilst in other branches of their manufacture they surpassed even the Mohammedans of Northern Africa.

The smelting process is of the most primitive description, and is the same that has been described by travellers in all parts of Africa. The simplicity of the arrangement is caused by the ventilating apparatus; for as the construction of valves is unknown, a continual draft is produced by means of two clay vessels, of which the openings are covered by the Monbuttoo smiths with plantain leaves, which have been allowed to simmer in hot water until they have become as flexible as silk: other nations cover the openings with soft skins. Although entirely without our pincers, hammers, and files, the Monbuttoo have a set of implements of their own, by means of which their iron-work is more carefully manipulated than that of any of their neighbours. Instead of the usual stone anvil, they use a miniature one of wrought iron, and on this each separate weapon is cut out with a chisel, and hammered until an approximate degree of sharpness is attained; the edge being brought to its finish by a piece of fine-ground sandstone or gneiss, which answers the purpose of a file. As a general rule, no special form is given to the iron used as a medium of exchange, unless indeed the great semicircular bars in the royal treasury be considered as currency, and which remind one of the rough copper rings

that are brought from the mines of Darfoor.* Neither plates of iron nor round spades (melots) are in vogue, but the smiths have to work from great lumps of iron as large as the fist. The dexterity of these artificers is wonderful, and the short space of time in which they will convert the raw material into spades and lances is, I should think, unrivalled. The Monbuttoo smiths often joined our Bongo workmen at their forges in our camp, and as I had frequent opportunity of observing and comparing the two, I do not hesitate in asserting the decided superiority of the workmanship of the Monbuttoo.

The masterpieces, however, of these Monbuttoo smiths are the ornamental chains which, in refinement of form and neatness of finish, might vie with our best steel chains; in fact, according to the judgment of *connoisseurs*, many of these specimens of autochthonic art may well bear comparison with the productions of our European craftsmen. The process of tempering is quite unknown to them, the necessary hardness being attained by continual hammering: the material used is singularly pure and homogeneous, qualities acquired not from any perfection of the smelting apparatus, but from the laborious welding of the separate particles of iron.

Copper was already known, and the king was in possession of large quantities of the metal, before the Nubians set foot in the country; and as previously to that event the Monbuttoo (if we except the great raid which Barth reports to have been made upon them by the Foorians in 1834) had had no intercourse with the Mohammedan world, there is every reason to conclude that they must have received their supply either from the copper mines of Angola and Loango, or from some other region of the north-western portion of South Africa.

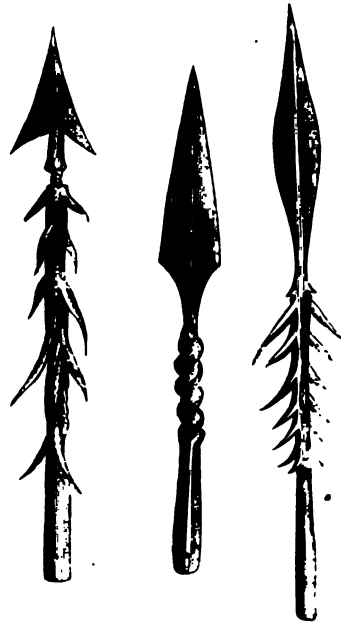
Almost all the ornaments worn by the Monbuttoo are made

* Iron rings of the heaviest calibre are current in Wandala, south of Bornou.

of copper, so that it may be easily understood that the demand for the metal is not small. One of the most frequent uses to which it is applied is that of making flat wires, many yards long, to wind round the handles of knives and scimitars, or round the shafts of lances and bows. Copper, as well as iron, is used for the clasps which are attached to the shields, partly for ornament and partly to prevent them from splitting. Copper necklaces are in continual wear, and copper fastenings are attached to the rings of buffalo-hide and to the thick thongs of the girdles. The little bars inserted through the ear are tipped with the same metal; in fact there is hardly an ornament that fails in an adjunct of copper in some form or other; persons of rank not unfrequently pride themselves in having ornamental weapons formed entirely of it. All other metals being unknown, iron and copper are estimated by the Monbuttoo as silver and gold by ourselves, and the silver platter with which I presented the king failed to elicit any comment beyond the observation that it was white iron. Lead and tin have been introduced as curiosities by the Nubians, but previous to their arrival had never been seen. Information, however, which was incidentally dropped by a Niam-niam, led me to suppose that fragments of platinum about the size of peas have been found in these lands: he told me that a white metal, as hard as iron and as heavy as the lead of which the Nubians made their bullets, had been discovered, but that its existence was always carefully concealed from the strangers. I see no reason to doubt the truth of this statement, since it originated from a people who in no other way could have become aware of the existence of such a metal, which has been hitherto as unknown to the Nubians as silver and gold to the Monbuttoo.

It would require many illustrations to convey an adequate idea of the various forms of the heads of the arrows and lances: suffice it to say, that the symmetry of the various

barbs, spikes, and prongs with which they are provided is always perfect. The prevailing forms of the spear-heads are hastate, whilst the arrows are generally made flat or spatular, as inflicting a deeper and wider wound than the pointed tips. All weapons of the Monbuttoo and the Niam-niam are provided with blood gutters, a mark which serves to distinguish them at once from those of the Bongo and Mittoo. The shafts of the Monbuttoo arrows are made of reed-grass, and differ from all others of the Bongo territory by being winged with pieces of genet's skin or plantain leaves. The bows are rather over three feet in length, and in form and size



Spear-heads.

correspond very nearly with those used by the Mittoo and Bongo; the bow-strings being made of a strip of the split Spanish reed, which possesses more elasticity than any cord. These bows are provided with a small hollow piece of wood for protecting the thumb from the rebound of the string. The arrow is always discharged from between the middle fingers.

The perfection of their instruments gives the Monbuttoo a great advantage in the art of wood-carving, and they are the only African nation, including even the modern Egyptians, who make use of a graving-tool with a single edge, an instrument which, by supporting the forefinger, enables the workman to give a superior finish to the details of his productions. The wood used for carving is generally that of

VOL. II.—9

the stem of one of the Rubiaceæ (*Uncaria*), of which the soft close texture resembles that of poplar-wood. The felling of these giant-trees, which vary from six to eight feet in diameter, and often shoot up to a height of forty feet without throwing forth a single branch, is performed by means of their small hatchets, with a most tedious amount of labour. The hatchets are like those which are used in other parts of Central Africa, and consist of a sharpened iron wedge inserted through the thick end of a knotted club; thus every blow tends to fix the blade firmer in its socket. The number of blows necessary to fell one of these ponderous trees must amount to several thousand, and yet I often noticed stems lying in the forest the ends of which were as smooth as though they had been cut with a kuife, a circumstance that attests their correctness of vision, a quality in which the negroes outshine the Arabs and Nubians, as much as in their appreciation of sound and musical talent. The first crude



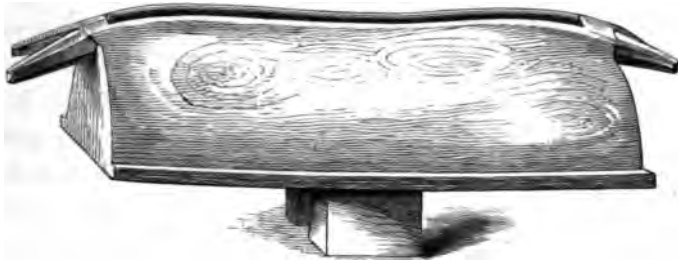
Hatchet, spade, and adze, of the Monbuttoo.

form is given to the larger blocks of wood by means of a tool something like a cooper's adze.* When first hewn, the wood of the *Uncaria* is white, but it is afterwards blackened by exposure to fire, or still more frequently by being allowed to lie in the dark soil of the brooks.

* One of these tools is represented in the accompanying illustration.

Platters, stools, drums, boats, and shields constitute the chief items of their handicraft. Upon the Lower Shary, the boats which are in common use are manufactured by fastening together wooden planks, but here, on the Welle, canoes are hewn out of a solid stem, and are in every way adapted for their purpose. I saw some of them upwards of thirty-eight feet long and five feet wide, quite large enough for the conveyance of horses and cattle.*

The large signal-drums of the Niam-niam are to be seen in every Monbuttoo village. They stand sometimes upon



Wooden kettle-drum.

four, and sometimes upon two, feet, and are like the instruments which are seen upon the West Coast. Another smaller kind is made in a semicircular shape, very compressed, and fitted with a handle at the top; the opening for the sound is below, and the instrument may be compared to a flattened bell.

Benches and stools, such as are exclusively used by the women, are made in every diversity of shape. They are carved out of a single block, for, to say the truth, no people of Central Africa seems to have acquired the art of joining one piece of wood to another, so that the craft of the cabinet-maker may be said to be unknown. The seats of these stools are circular and somewhat hollowed out, surmounting a

* A boat of this kind is seen in the view of the rapids of the Keebaly, in Chap. XVII.

prettily carved stem, which rises from a circular or polygonal base. Close to the edge of the seat is a triangular aperture, which serves as a handle. They are usually made from



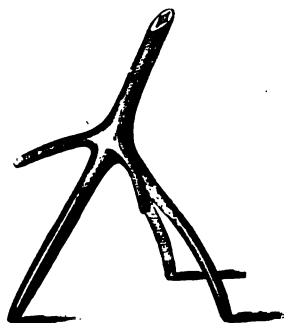
Single seat used by the Women.

twelve to sixteen inches high, and are hardly to be distinguished from certain contrivances for meal-times, which are here made so as to serve at once for table and plate. Wooden platters there are of every possible size: one kind of them has two open ring-shaped handles; another stands upon four feet, and both are patterns quite worthy of our own factories at home. Besides the single

seats they are in the habit of making long benches also with four feet. The practice of making all their utensils to stand upon feet is all but universal among the Niam-niam and the Monbuttoo, even the little cylindrical boxes covered with bark for storing away their knick-knacks being finished off in this fashion. The ordinary seats of the men are made exclusively from the leaf-stalks of the *Raphia* palm: they always keep to precisely the same form, and in their manufacture appear to indicate a first attempt at the joiner's art. The benches of the Monbuttoo men are about five feet long and of corresponding width; they are made of such lightness that one of our bearers, without any apparent exertion, carried six of them at once; but they are nevertheless of very extraordinary firmness, and the way in which the separate parts are fixed together is really very ingenious. The Monbuttoo do not fasten their benches or any of their structures by means of nails or pegs, but they sew them, as it were, together by fine split Spanish reeds, which by their unyielding toughness

answer as admirably as in the manufacture of our cane-chairs.

Backs are not attached to the Monbuttoo seats; but as some support of the kind is clearly indispensable, they endeavour to supply its place by placing by the side of their benches a singular sort of crutch. This is obtained by taking a young tree and cutting a section of it, where what botanists call its "verticillate ramification" has developed itself into four additional separate limbs: the main stem and two of the boughs supply the three feet, the other two boughs serving, with the continuation of the stem, to make the arms and back. No wood is so available for the purpose as that of the cotton tree (*Eriodendron*).



Seat-rest.

The shields of the warriors are hewn out of the thickest stems by means of the axe, and consist of perfectly smooth rectangular boards, not more than half an inch thick, but which are long enough to cover two-thirds of the person. These inelegant instruments of defensive warfare, in which the recommendation of solidity is ill sacrificed for the sake of their lightness, require to be protected from splitting or starting, and to secure this a number of parallel seams of rotang are fixed across the width, and both the upper and lower edges are provided with a strong border of rotang twist, and a strong rib run across the middle gives them an additional firmness. They are generally decorated with tails of the guinea-hog (*Potamochoærus*), and are invariably stained quite black. If any fissures or cracks should be detected, they are at once drawn together by iron and copper braces.

Contrasted with the rest of Africa, and even with the

Bongo, whose comparative skill was noticed on a previous page,* the district shows a very considerable advance in the manufacture of their pottery. Although they remain as unacquainted as other races with the use of the wheel, their productions, besides being of a superior quality, are of a more perfect symmetry than any which are elsewhere observed. All the vessels and drinking-cups of the Africans in general



Water-bottles.

have the character of urns, being made without handles and being never otherwise than spherical in form; but those of the Monbuttoo exhibit a manifest improvement, and by having the surface decorated either with some raised symmetrical pattern (which is especially the case upon their oil vessels) or with some ornamental figures, they afford a firm hold to the hand, and thus make good the lack of handles for lifting them. It is, however, principally upon the water-bottles that the greatest care is bestowed, some of which may fairly be said to rival in symmetry the far-famed examples of Egyptian art, and to betray a considerable faculty of plastic genius.†

* *Vide* vol. i. page 292.

† The two examples of water-bottles given in the engravings are copies of the originals, which are deposited in the Ethnographical Museum in Berlin.

For the bowls of pipes, upon which other of the native populations lavish so much care, they have no use. They smoke only the Virginian tobacco, and for this purpose employ the midrib of the plantain leaf in the way that I have already described,* superseding entirely the necessity for a solid bowl.

They are very ignorant of the art of leather-dressing, and are no more acquainted with the use of tan than any of the rest of the tribes that have their homes in the Bahr-el-Ghazal district.

Their baskets and nets are woven out of rotang, the form of the baskets in which they bear burdens on their backs being very similar to those which are seen amongst the Thuringians. Their mode of dressing their hair necessarily prevents them from ever carrying a load upon their heads.

They are in the habit of twisting ornaments for themselves out of reeds and grass, which they wear like rings round their arms and legs, and which make a rustling sound as they walk. They bestow a great amount of care in weaving the fine webs which hold on their hats and chignons. The rattles, filled with shells and pebbles, that are used for beating time to the music of the drums and horns at the great festivals are also woven from reeds.

The Monbuttoo musical instruments require no particular description. They do not include the pretty little mandolins of the Niam-niam, nor any other stringed instruments, and their horns, trumpets, and drums may be said to be little short of universal throughout Africa. Wooden dulcimers (Marimba) are met with neither here nor in South Africa.

But the artistic versatility of the people reveals itself more than anywhere else in their architectural skill. It would hardly be credited that Africa would be capable of rearing

To the one in three compartments handles are attached, being the only instance of the kind that I ever saw.

* *Vide* vol. i. page 547.

any erection so spacious and well proportioned as the hall of Munza's palace. This was little short of 150 feet in length and 60 feet in breadth, and rose to the height of about 50 feet. Combined with these imposing dimensions were a lightness of character and solidity of structure that were quite remarkable. The ever-useful leaf-stalks of the wine-palm form the principal building-material, and its natural polish and bright brown colour give every building for which it is used an aspect of finished grace. The flat horizontal roofs of their huts, as distinguished from the conical roofs which we have hitherto observed as almost universal throughout the rest of Central Africa, mark out these Monbuttoos in a fresh respect as being allied to the natives of the west, viz., the Ishogo, the Ashango, the Bakalai, the Ashiva, the Camma, the Mpongwe, and the Fan—a relation that is further confirmed by the physical character of the land, the streams of which flow to the west instead of to the north. Some of the huts, however, have conical roofs, and these are generally appropriated, either as kitchens, because they allow better escape for the smoke, or as granaries, because they throw off the rain more rapidly.

The dwellings of the ordinary population are by no means large, being seldom more than thirty feet long, and twenty feet wide; the roofs project considerably, and are slightly rounded with a bend corresponding to the natural curvature of the palm leaves from which they are made, and which furnish the ribs of the roof. They are rendered water-tight by a lining of plantain leaves, which is frequently covered again with grass, straw, or skin. The walls are built up to a height of five or six feet, and are lined like the roof and bound together by the split Spanish reed. This, again, is the mode of erecting the huts upon the West Coast. It offers an astonishing power of resistance to the fury of the elements, which, left to play upon rows of posts or to range through open halls, might be expected to work complete destruction;

yet such is the stability with which the Monbuttoo huts are raised, that they never totter in a storm, and only show by a slight trembling in the walls that they are exposed to the violence of a hurricane.

A spacious doorway is the only aperture for light and air, the door itself being made in one piece; the interior is divided into two apartments, the more remote of which is reserved for the stores.

Plantations of trees are frequent, and still more frequent are patches of shrubs, which are intentionally suffered to grow, and which, as being serviceable, are permitted to survive the extirpation of the ancient forests. These are generally to be seen in the immediate vicinity of the unenclosed farms. In addition to them, many trees are allowed to stand for the sake of the shelter they afford; and some are kept because of their useful products, as for example, the *Tephrosia Vogelii*, which furnishes the powder for poisoning fish; or the *Randia malleifera*, which produces the pigment for the staining of the skin, and of which the white funnel-shaped blossoms are a striking ornament to the bushes; and some are retained merely for ornament and for increasing the pleasantness of the external aspect of their dwellings. As examples of this superfluous indulgence I may refer to the marvellous *Mussaenda*, with its glowing bracts, and to the variety of resplendent orchids. Here, too, I noticed what I must not omit to record, the turf-like *Chlorophytum*, with its variegated leaves of mingled white and green, which is employed among the Niam-niam as a charm to detect a thief, much in the same way as the *Canavalia ensiformis*, known as the "overlook" or horse-bean, is employed in Jamaica and Haiti, where it is sown in the negro-plantations for that purpose.

The huts are arranged in sets following the lines of the brooks along the valleys, the space between each group being occupied by plantations of oil-palms. The dwellings

are separated from the lowest parts of the depressions by the plantain-grounds, whilst above, on the higher and drier soil, extend the fields of sweet-potatoes and colocasæ.

No one could seriously expect a traveller, after a transient residence of five weeks, to pass anything like a decided judgment upon the religious ideas of a people like the Monbuttoo. A wide scope for speculation is undoubtedly opened, but it would ill become a stranger to pretend to pronounce a conclusive verdict. I must be excused, therefore, from drawing any very definite inference from the fact that they adopt the rite of circumcision so far as to have it performed on boys when they come to an age of puberty, a period of life which is neither in accordance with the original prescription, nor with the doctrine of Mohammed. I may say, however, that I never allowed myself to be unconcerned with regard to any of the people amongst whom I journeyed as to their opinions about a presiding Deity, but, by collecting all the proofs I could from their habitual speech, I endeavoured to learn what were their conceptions about the sovereignty of an invisible power, and its influence upon the destinies of men.

The Monbuttoo have undoubtedly very intelligent ideas of what the Nubians mean by their bowing of the knee, their prostrations to the ground, and their cry of "Allah!" The very designation which they use to express their conception of God as the concentration of the Supreme Being, opens a long vista into the kindred association of African people. In the district of the Mahas, the word now employed for the God of the Nubians is "Nor," and, upon the authority of my interpreters, I may state that "Noro" was the term by which, after the double interpretation, "Allah" was rendered to me. When the question was put as to where "Noro" resided, the Monbuttoo, who was familiar with the Niam-niam dialect, pointed upwards to the sky; but when he was further pressed with the inquiry whether he could

see him, he only answered with a smile. Whether the Monbuttoo are in the habit of consulting oracles, or whether they have any reliance upon auguries from fowls, or any fortune-telling apparatus corresponding to the "damma" of the Niam-niam, my residence among them was not long enough to permit me to ascertain.



Bongo woman.

Dinka woman.

(See description, vol. i., p. 296.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PYGMIES. Nubian stories. Ancient classical allusions. Homer, Herodotus, Aristotle. My introduction to Pygmies. Adimokoo the Akka. Close questioning. War-dance. Visits from many Akka. Mummery's Pygmy corps. My adopted Pygmy. Nsewue's life and death. Dwarf races of Africa. Accounts of previous authors: Battel, Dapper, Kölle. Analogy of Akka with Bushmen. Height and complexion. Hair and beards. Shape of the body. Awkward gait. Graceful hands. Form of skull. Size of eyes and ears. Lips. Gesticulations. Dialect inarticulate. Dexterity and cunning. Munza's protection of the race.

WHENEVER two or three Egyptians are found in company, the chances are very great that their conversation, if it could be overheard, would be found to relate to the market prices of the day, or to some fluctuations in the state of trade. With the romantic sons of the Nubian Nile-valley the case would be very different. Ample opportunity of making this comparison was continually afforded me during the long evenings which I passed in my transit upon the waters of the Upper Nile; and even now I can recall with vivid interest the hours when, from my detached compartment on the stern of the boat, I could, without being observed, listen to the chatter by which the Nubians on the voyage beguiled their time. They seemed to talk with eagerness of all the wonders of the world. Some would expatiate upon the splendours of the City of the Caliphs, and others enlarge upon the accomplishment of the Suez Canal and the huge ships of the Franks; but the stories that ever commanded the most rapt attention were those which treated of war and

of the chase ; or, beyond all, such as described the wild beasts and still wilder natives of Central Africa.

It was not with stories in the sense of 'The Thousand and One Nights' that this people entertained each other ; neither did they recite their prolix histories as though they were reading at the celebration of Ramadan in Cairo, amidst the halls where night by night they abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of their coffee. These things I had now long ago left far behind ; however, occasionally, as the expiring strain of Arabia, I might still hear the song of Abd-el-Kader the sheikh, or of Abou Zeyd the hero. My whole style of living seemed now to partake of the character of an Odyssey ; it appeared to be adapted for the embellishment of an Homeric episode, and such an episode in truth was already awaiting me.

Of the Nile itself, which had the appearance, day by day, of becoming wider as farther and farther we progressed towards the south, they affirmed that it issued from the ocean by which Africa was girt ; they would declare that we were on the route which would lead us, like the cranes, to fight with the Pygmies ; ever and again they would speak of Cyclops, of Automoli, or of "Pygmies," but by whatever name they called them, they seemed never to weary of recurring to them as the theme of their talk. Some there were who averred that with their own eyes they had seen this people of immortal myth ; and these—men as they were whose acquaintance might have been coveted by Herodotus and envied by Aristotle—were none other than my own servants.

It was a fascinating thing to hear them confidently relate that in the land to the south of the Niam-niam country there dwelt people who never grew to more than three feet in height, and who wore beards so long that they reached to their knees.* It was affirmed of them that, armed with

* It may be remarked that the people of the Soudan when they depict a dwarf, ordinarily, like we should ourselves, represent him as a diminutive man with a long beard.

strong lances, they would creep underneath the belly of an elephant and dexterously kill the beast, managing their own movements so adroitly that they could not be reached by the creature's trunk. Their services in this way were asserted to contribute very largely to the resources of the ivory traders. The name by which they are known is the "Shebber-digintoo," which implies the growth of the disproportioned beard.

I listened on. The more, however, that I pondered silently over the stories that they involuntarily disclosed—the more I studied the traditions to which they referred—so much the more I was perplexed to explain what must either be the creative faculty or the derived impressions of the Nubians. Whence came it that they could have gained any knowledge at all of what Homer had sung? How did it happen that they were familiar at all with the material which Ovid and Juvenal, and Nonnus and Statius worked into their verse, giving victory at one time to the cranes, and at another to the Pygmies themselves?

My own ideas of Pygmies were gathered originally only from books, but the time seemed now to have come when their existence should be demonstrated in actual life.

Legends of Pygmies had mingled themselves already with the earliest surviving literature of the Greeks, and the poet of the *Iliad*, it will be remembered, mentions them as a race that had long been known:—

"To warmer seas the cranes embodied fly,
With noise, and order, through the midway sky;
To pygmy nations wounds and death they bring,
And all the war descends upon the wing."

Pope's 'Homer's Iliad,' iii. 6-10.

But not the classic *poets* alone; sober historians and precise geographers have either adopted the poetic substance of the tradition or have endeavoured, by every kind of conjecture, to confirm its accuracy. Nothing, for instance, can be more

definite than the statement of Herodotus about the Nasamonians after they had crossed the Libyan deserts: "They at length saw some trees growing on a plain, and having approached they began to gather the fruit that grew on the trees; and while they were gathering it some diminutive men, less than men of middle stature, came up and seized them and carried them away."* The testimony of Aristotle is yet more precise when he says plainly: "The cranes fly to the lakes above Egypt, from which flows the Nile; there dwell the Pygmies, and this is no fable but the pure truth; there, just as we are told, do men and horses of diminutive size dwell in caves;"† a quotation this, which would seem to imply that the learned Stagyrte was in possession of some exact and positive information, otherwise he would not have ventured to insist so strongly upon the truth of his assertion. Very likely, however, we should be justified in surmising that Aristotle mentions cranes and Pygmies together only because he had the passage of the *Iliad* floating in his memory, and because he was aware of the fact that cranes do pass the winter in Africa. For my own part, I should be inclined to doubt whether cranes ever reach the Victoria and Albert Nyanza; on the Red Sea I saw them in latitude 20° N., and Brehm observed them in Sennaar; on the White Nile, however, and farther inland, I only found the native Balearic crane, which could hardly have been the species mentioned by Aristotle. But whether cranes were really capable of fighting with Pygmies or not, or whether (as Pauer attempts to prove) the Homeric tradition was derived from ancient Egyptian symbolism, and so was an emblematic representation of the cranes battling with the falling waters of the Nile stream, this is now immaterial; all that concerns us, with regard to the present topic, is that three or four

* Herodotus, ii. 32.

† Aristotle's 'Hist. Animal,' lib. viii. cap. 2.

centuries before the Christian era the Greeks were aware of the existence of a people inhabiting the districts about the sources of the Nile, who were remarkable for their stunted growth. The circumstance may warrant us, perhaps, in employing the designation of "pygmy," not for men literally a span long, but in the sense of Aristotle, for the dwarf races of Equatorial Africa.

Throughout the time that I had resided in the Seribas of the Bongo territory, of course I had frequent opportunities of enlarging my information, and I was continually hearing such romantic stories that I became familiarised in a way with the belief that the men about me had really been eye-witnesses of the circumstances they related. Those who had been attached to the Niam-niam expeditions, whenever they described the variety of wonders about the splendour of the courts of the cannibal kings, never omitted to mention the dwarfs who filled the office of court buffoons; every one outvying another in the fantastic embellishment of the tales they told. The general impression that remained upon my mind was that these must be some extraordinary specimens of pathological phenomena that had been retained by the kings as natural curiosities. The instance did not escape my recollection that Speke had given the description and portrait of a dwarf, Kimenya, with whom he had become acquainted at the court of Kamrasi; * but that there could be a whole series of tribes whose average height was far below an average never really found a reception in my understanding, until at the court of Munza the positive evidence was submitted to my eyes.

Several days elapsed after my taking up my residence by the palace of the Monbuttoo king without my having a chance to get a view of the dwarfs, whose fame had so keenly excited my curiosity. My people, however, assured me that

* 'Speke's Travels,' p. 550.

they had seen them. I remonstrated with them for not having secured me an opportunity of seeing for myself, and for not bringing them into contact with me. I obtained no other reply but that the dwarfs were too timid to come. After a few mornings my attention was arrested by a shouting in the camp, and I learned that Mohammed had surprised one of the Pygmies in attendance upon the king, and was conveying him, in spite of a strenuous resistance, straight to my tent. I looked up, and *there*, sure enough, was the strange little creature, perched upon Mohammed's right shoulder, nervously hugging his head, and casting glances of alarm in every direction. Mohammed soon deposited him in the seat of honour. A royal interpreter was stationed at his side. Thus, at last, was I able veritably to feast my eyes upon a living embodiment of the myths of some thousand years!

Eagerly, and without loss of time, I proceeded to take his portrait. I pressed him with innumerable questions, but to ask for information was an easier matter altogether than to get an answer. There was the greatest difficulty in inducing him to remain at rest, and I could only succeed by exhibiting a store of presents. Under the impression that the opportunity before me might not occur again, I bribed the interpreter to exercise his influence to pacify the little man, to set him at his ease, and to induce him to lay aside any fear of me that he might entertain. Altogether we succeeded so well that in a couple of hours the Pygmy had been measured, sketched, feasted, presented with a variety of gifts, and subjected to a minute catechism of searching questions.

His name was Adimokoo. He was the head of a small colony, which was located about half a league from the royal residence. With his own lips I heard him assert that the name of his nation was Akka, and I further learnt that they inhabit large districts to the south of the Monbuttoo between lat. 2° and 1° N. A portion of them are subject to the

Monbuttoo king, who, desirous of enhancing the splendour of his court by the addition of any available natural curiosities, had compelled several families of the Pygmies to settle in the vicinity.

My Niam-niam servants, sentence by sentence, interpreted to me everything that was said by Adimokoo to the Monbuttoo interpreter, who was acquainted with no dialects but those of his own land.

In reply to my question put to Adimokoo as to where his country was situated, pointing towards the S.S.E., he said, "Two days' journey and you come to the village of Mummery; on the third day you will reach the River Nalobe; the fourth day you arrive at the first of the villages of the Akka."

"What do you call the rivers of your country?"

"They are the Nalobe, the Namerikoo, and the Eddoopaa."

"Have you any river as large as the Welle?"

"No; ours are small rivers, and they all flow into the Welle."

"Are you all one people, or are you divided into separate tribes?"

To this inquiry Adimokoo replied by a sudden gesture, as if to indicate the vastness of their extent, and commenced enumerating the tribes one after another. "There are the Navapukah, the Navatipeh, the Vabingisso, the Avadzube, the Avagowumba, the Bandoa, the Mamomoo, and the Agabundah."

"How many kings?" I asked.

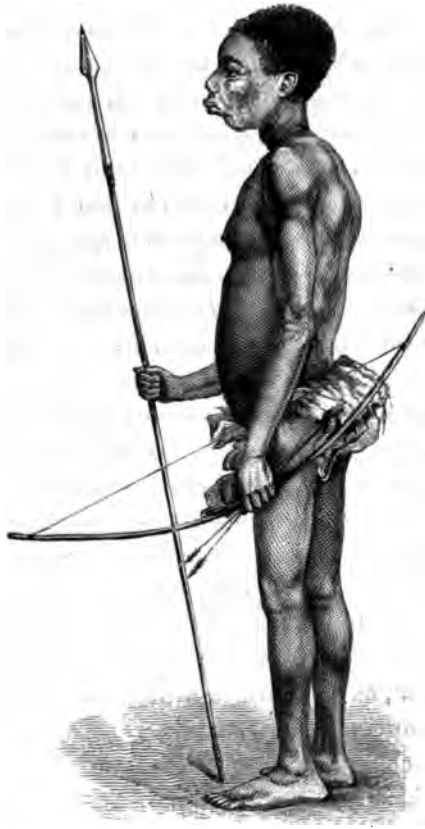
"Nine," he said; but I could only make out the names of Galeema, Beddeh, Tindaga, and Mazembe.

My next endeavour was directed to discover whether he was acquainted in any way with the dwarf races that have been mentioned by previous travellers, and whose homes I presumed would be somewhere in this part of Africa. I asked him whether he knew the Malagilagé, who, according

to the testimony of Escayrac de Lauture, live to the south of Baghirmy. My question, however, only elicited a comical gesture of bewilderment and a vague inquiry, "What is that?" Nor did I succeed at all better in securing any recognition of the tribes of the Kenkob or the Betsan, which are mentioned by Kölle. Equally unavailing, too, were all my efforts to obtain answers of any precision to the series of questions which I invented, taking my hints from Petermann and Hassenstein's map of Central Africa, so that I was obliged to give up my geographical inquiries in despair and turn to other topics. But in reality there did not occur any subject whatever on which I obtained any information that seems to me to be worth recording. At length, after having submitted so long to my curious and persistent questionings, the patience of Adimokoo was thoroughly exhausted, and he made a frantic leap in his endeavour to escape from the tent. Surrounded, however, by a crowd of inquisitive Bongo and Nubians, he was unable to effect his purpose, and was compelled, against his will, to remain for a little longer. After a time a gentle persuasion was brought to bear, and he was induced to go through some of the characteristic evolutions of his war-dances. He was dressed, like the Monbuttoo, in a rokko-coat and plumed hat, and was armed with a miniature lance as well as with a bow and arrow. His height I found to be about 4 feet 10 inches, and this I reckon to be the average measurement of his race.

Although I had repeatedly been astonished at witnessing the war-dances of the Niam-niam, I confess that my amazement was greater than ever when I looked upon the exhibition which the Pygmy afforded. In spite of his large, bloated belly and short bandy legs—in spite of his age, which, by the way, was considerable—Adimokoo's agility was perfectly marvellous, and I could not help wondering whether cranes would ever be likely to contend with such creatures. The little man's leaps and attitudes were accompanied by such

lively and grotesque varieties of expression that the spectators shook again and held their sides with laughter. The



Bomby the Akka.

interpreter explained to the Niam-niam that the Akka jump about in the grass like grasshoppers, and that they are so nimble that they shoot their arrows into an elephant's eye and drive their lances into their bellies. The gestures of the Akka, to which I shall have occasion again to refer, always reminded me of the pictures given by travellers to represent the Bushmen of the south.

Adimokoo returned home loaded with presents. I made him understand that I should be glad to see all his people, and

promised that they should lose nothing by coming.

On the following day I had the pleasure of a visit from two of the younger men. I had the opportunity of sketching their likenesses, and as one of the portraits has been preserved it is inserted here.

After they had once got over their alarm, some or other of the Akka came to me almost every day. As exceptional

cases, I observed that some individuals were of a taller stature; but upon investigation I always ascertained that this was the result of intermarriage with the Monbuttoo amongst whom they resided. My sudden departure from Munza's abode interrupted me completely in my study of this interesting people, and I was compelled to leave before I had fully mastered the details of their peculiarities. I regret that I never chanced to see one of the Akka women, and still more that my visit to their dwellings was postponed from day to day until the opportunity was lost altogether.

I am not likely to forget a *rencontre* which I had with several hundred Akka warriors, and could very heartily wish that the circumstances had permitted me to give a pictorial representation of the scene. King Munza's brother Mummery, who was a kind of viceroy in the southern section of his dominions, and to whom the Akka were tributary, was just returning to the court from a successful campaign against the black Momvoo. Accompanied by a large band of soldiers, amongst whom was included a corps of Pygmies, he was conveying the bulk of the booty to his royal master. It happened on the day in question that I had been making a long excursion with my Niam-niam servants, and had heard nothing of Mummery's arrival. Towards sunset I was passing along the extensive village on my return to my quarters, when, just as I reached the wide open space in front of the royal halls, I found myself surrounded by what I conjectured must be a crowd of impudent boys, who received me with a sort of bravado fight. They pointed their arrows towards me, and behaved generally in a manner at which I could not help feeling somewhat irritated, as it betokened unwarrantable liberty and intentional disrespect. My misapprehension was soon corrected by the Niam-niam people about me. "They are Tikkitikki,"* said they; "you imagine

* Tikkitikki is the Niam-niam designation of the Akka.

that they are boys, but in truth they are men; nay, men that can fight." At this moment a seasonable greeting from Mummery drew me off from any apprehension on my part and from any further contemplation of the remarkable spectacle before me. In my own mind I resolved that I would minutely inspect the camp of the new-comers on the following morning; but I had reckoned without my host: before dawn Mummery and his contingent of Pygmies had taken their departure, and thus,

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision."

this people, so near and yet so unattainable, had vanished once more into the dim obscurity of the innermost continent.

Anxious, in my contact with this mythical race, to lose or pass over nothing which might be of interest, I very diligently made memoranda after every interview that I had with the Akka. I measured six full-grown individuals, none of whom much exceeded 4 feet 10 inches in height, but, unfortunately, all my notes and many of my drawings perished in the fire.

A brief account may now be given of the little Pygmy that I carried off and kept with me during the remainder of my wanderings till I was again in Nubia, who for a year and a half became my companion, thriving under my care and growing almost as affectionate as a son.

I have already explained in a previous chapter the circumstances under which the little man came into my keeping. I succeeded tolerably well in alleviating the pain of the lad's parting from all his old associations by providing him with all the good living and bestowing upon him all the attention that lay in my power. To reconcile him to his lot I broke through an old rule. I allowed him to be my constant companion at my meals—an exception that I never made in favour of any other native of Africa. Making

it my first care that he should be healthy and contented. I submitted without a murmur to all the uncouth habits peculiar to his race. In Khartoom at last I dressed him up till he looked like a little pasha. The Nubians could not in the least enter into my infatuation, nor account for my partiality towards the strange-looking lad. When he walked along the thoroughfares at my side they pointed to him, and cried, with reference to his bright-brown complexion, "See, there goes the son of the Khavaga!" Apparently they overlooked the fact of the boy's age, and seemed not to be in any way familiarised with the tradition of the Pygmies. In the Seribas all along our route the little fellow excited a still greater astonishment.

Notwithstanding all my assiduity and attention, I am sorry to record that Nsewue died in Berber, from a prolonged attack of dysentery, originating not so much in any change of climate, or any alteration in his mode of living, as in his immoderate excess in eating, a propensity which no influence on my part was sufficient to control.

During the last ten months of his life, my *protégé* did not make any growth at all. I think I may therefore presume that his height would never have exceeded 4 feet 7 inches, which was his measurement at the time of his death. The portrait on the following page may be accepted as a faithful representation of one who was a fair type of his race.

Altogether very few examples of the Akka came under my notice; but so ample was my opportunity of studying in detail the peculiarities of this individual specimen, that, in the course of any observations that follow, I shall feel justified in referring to Nsewue, when the rest of my experience furnishes no other illustration.

The Akka would appear to be a branch of that series of dwarf races which, exhibiting all the characteristics of an aboriginal stock, extend along the equator entirely across



Nsewue the Akka

Africa. Whatever travellers have penetrated far into the interior of the continent, have furnished abundant testimony as to the mere fact of the existence of tribes of singularly diminutive height; whilst their accounts are nearly all coincident in representing that these dwarf races differ in hardly anything from the surrounding nations excepting only in their size. It would be entirely an error to describe them as dwarfs either in the sense of the ancient myths, or in the way of *lusus naturæ*, such as are exhibited as curiosities amongst ourselves; most of the accounts, moreover, that have been given, concur in the statement that

these undersized people are distinguished from their neighbours by a redder or brighter shade of complexion; but they differ very considerably in the reports they make about the growth of the hair. The only traveller, I believe, before myself that has come into contact with any section of this race is Du Chaillu, who, in the territory of the Ashango, discovered a wandering tribe of hunters called Obongo, and took the measurements of a number of them. He describes these Obongo as "not ill-shaped," and as having skins of a pale, yellow-brown, somewhat lighter than their neighbours; he speaks of their having short heads of hair, but a great growth of hair about their bodies. Their average height he affirms to be 4 feet 7 inches. In every particular but the abundance of hair about the person, this description is quite applicable to the Akka. According to Battel,* there was a nation of dwarfs, called the Matimbos or Dongo, to the north-east of the land of Tobbi, which lies to the north of the Sette River, and consequently in the same district as that in which Du Chaillu discovered the Obongo. Portuguese authorities, moreover, quite at the beginning of the seventeenth century, contain a distinct reference to a dwarf nation called Bakka-bakka. Dapper furnishes corresponding information on the same subject; and all that he relates about the dwarfs coincides very accurately with what is known about the Akka, whose name had penetrated even at that date to the western equatorial coasts. It is to be understood that districts were known by the name of the people who chanced to be occupying them, and not by any permanent name of the soil itself. After Dapper, in his compilation, had told the history of the Yagas, who is said in olden time to have spread fear and destruction as far as the coasts of the Loango, a hundred miles away, so that it took three months for caravans to come and go, he proceeds

* *Vide* Battel. 'Purchas his Pilg.,' II. London, 1625, p. 983.

to state that the greater part of the ivory was obtained still farther inland, and was brought from a people who were tributary to the great Makoko, and called Mimos or Bakke-bakke. "These little men," he writes,* "are stated by the Yagas to have the power of making themselves invisible, and consequently can slay an elephant with little trouble." And this dexterity in killing elephants seems to be implied in another place,† where, in describing the court of Loango and the dwarfs who took up their positions before the throne, he says, "the negroes affirm that there is a wilderness inhabited by those dwarfs, and where there are many elephants; they are generally called Bakke-bakke, but sometimes Mimos." Farther on again‡ he speaks of the empire of the great Makoko (described as lying beyond the kingdom of Kongo, and some 200 miles or more inland, north of the River Zaire), and proceeds to specify that "in the wilderness of this country there are to be found the little people that have been mentioned before, who carry on the greater part of the ivory trade throughout the kingdom." Besides this it is expressly stated that the ivory was bartered for the salt of Loango. Now in none of the countries that I visited in Central Africa was either sea salt or common salt ever an article of commerce, but each separate nation produced its own supply from ashes: but whilst I was at the court of Munza I learnt from the Khartoomers who had settled there that, as matter of fact, king Munza did receive tribute from the Akka in the shape of "*real good salt*," which was brought from the far south. Taken in connection with Dapper's account, this statement would seem to justify the hypothesis that even at this day there may be commercial transactions between the very heart of Africa, where the Akka dwell, and the western coasts.

Still more demonstrative than any reports about Matimbos

* Dapper, Germ. ed., Amsterd., p. 571. † *Ib.*, p. 527. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 573.

and Bakke-bakke, as proving the identity of my Akka with the abnormally-formed folks previously named, is the evidence that is furnished by the natives of the Upper Shary districts. Escayrac de Lauture* was told of a Lake Koeidabo, which was said to be a two months' journey to the S.S.E. of Masena, the capital of Baghirmy, and to unite the source-affluents of the Shary just at the spot where, according to the Monbuttoo, the Welle widens into a boundless expanse of water. Somewhat to the west of this lake, he was informed, were the dwellings of the Mala-gilageh (literally, men with tails), who were of small stature and reddish complexion, or, as the Africans expressed it, "*white*," and covered with long hair. The fabulous tails must be supposed to be added by a kind of poetic licence, or as a concession to the belief in marvellous stories that were rife throughout the Soudan. It may with much probability be assumed that the same districts in Central Africa must be the homes of the Kenkob and Betsan, of whom Kölle,† residing in Sierra Leone, heard reports from those who professed to have actually seen them. In these reports the great lake was very often referred to. One of Kölle's informants called it "Leeba," and said that he had on one occasion personally accompanied an embassy that was commissioned to convey a present of salt to the king who governed over the territories by the shores of the lake; and he distinctly affirmed not only that the Kenkob lived in close proximity to the same lake, but that they were a people only three or four feet in height, but who nevertheless possessed great strength and were excellent hunters. Another witness informed Kölle that he only knew of "a river Reebe" in that part of the country; but it is extremely likely that in reality he was referring to the same Lake

* 'Bulletin de la Soc. de Géograph. de Paris,' tom. x., 1855.

† 'Polyglotta Africana,' p. 12.

Leeba which, by repeated geographical investigation, has been proved to be a part of the Shary: * he went on to describe that by this river Reeba there dwelt a diminutive race called Betsan, varying from three feet to five feet in height, and stated that they had very long hair and very long beards, adding that they supported themselves entirely by the produce of the chase.

Both these witnesses agreed in describing the hair of the dwarfs as long; and I always found that the Niam-niam laid particular stress upon their having long beards; but I must confess I never observed this characteristic in any of the Akka who came under my notice.

Nor is east Tropical Africa without its representatives of people of this stunted growth. Of these I may especially mention the Doko, who are reported to dwell to the south of Enarea and Kaffa on the Upper Juba. Krapf, who has with much diligence compared the various accounts of many slaves who have been carried away from the district in question to Shoa, fixes the habitation of the Doko as being below the latitude of 3° north. Their height is compared with that of boys ten years of age. Even those who have seen them and (like A. d'Abbadie) deny that they are *dwarfs*, yet admit that they are under a medium stature. On the coast itself, in Zanzibar and at Brava, where, occasioned by the Mohammedan Somali, there is a considerable intercourse with the districts said to be populated by the Doko, stories of these dwarfs are in every one's mouth, and they are termed the "Berikeemo," *i.e.* people two feet high.

This rapid summary of the dwarf races that are known in Africa would be incomplete without a passing reference to the Kimos of Madagascar, of whom, from the middle of the seventeenth century down to our own time the most contradictory

* In nearly all the negro dialects the letters *l* and *r* are used indifferently: and Africans, as a rule, very much confound the ideas of lake and river.

reports have been in circulation. Any detailed accounts of these would of course be here entirely out of place. Madagascar, too, from its isolation, must ever be treated independently. The relation of its inhabitants to the inhabitants of Central Africa is very doubtful. It will now suffice to say generally that the evidence appears to lie open before us of there being a series of unestablished and imperfectly developed nations which, although they are now in their decline, extend from ocean to ocean across the entire equatorial zone of Africa.

Scarcely a doubt can exist but that all these people, like the Bushmen of South Africa, may be considered as the scattered remains of an aboriginal population now becoming extinct; and their isolated and sporadic existence bears out the hypothesis. For centuries after centuries Africa has been experiencing the effects of many immigrations: for thousands of years one nation has been driving out another, and as the result of repeated subjugations and interminglings of race with race, such manifold changes have been introduced into the conditions of existence that the succession of new phases, like the development in the world of plants, appears almost as it were to open a glimpse into the infinite.

Incidentally I have just referred to the Bushmen, those notorious natives of the South African forests, who owe their name to the likeness which the Dutch colonists conceived they bore to the ape, as the prototype of the human race. I may further remark that their resemblance to the equatorial Pygmies is in many points very striking. Gustav Fritsch, the author of a standard work upon the natives of South Africa, first drew my attention to the marked similarity between my portraits of the Akka and the general type of the Bushmen, and so satisfied did I become in my own mind that I feel quite justified (in my observations upon the Akka) in endeavouring to prove that all the tribes of Africa whose proper characteristic is an abnormally low stature belong to one and the self-same race.

According to Fritsch the average height of the genuine Bushmen is 1.44 metres, or about 4 feet 8½ inches; the height of the two Akka, whose portraits I have inserted, were 4 feet 1 inch and 4 feet 4 inches respectively; and, as I have said, I never saw any instance in which the height materially exceeded 4 feet 10 inches. The skin of the Akka is of a dull brown tint, something of the colour of partially roasted coffee. As far as I can remember, the colour would correspond nearly with Nos. 7 and 8 in the table of skin-tints in Plate 49 of Fritsch's work, and these are the numbers by which he indicates the complexion of the Bushmen. It is somewhat difficult to discriminate between the complexion of the Akka and that of their neighbours the Monbuttoo, since the latter exhibit a variety of shades of the same tint; but I should be inclined to say that the distinction lies in the somewhat duller hue of the Akka, such as might be understood by comparing No. 2 with No. 8 in the table to which I have referred.

The hair and beard are but slightly developed. All the Akka that I saw wore the ordinary costume and cylindrical straw hat of the Monbuttoo; but, in consequence of their hair being short as well as woolly, they are unable to form a chignon like their neighbours. The colour of their hair corresponds with their complexion; in texture it may best be compared with the waste tow from old cordage. This absence of the beard is characteristic also of the Bushmen. The Nubians indeed used to tell me of the dwarfs about the courts of the Niam-niam princes being noted for long hair, and they affirmed that some of them, in the fashion of the West Africans, were in the habit of stiffening out their long pointed tufts of hair on their chin with pitch; no doubt, too, their common designation for this people (Shebber digintoo) has reference to this characteristic; but I could never succeed in getting any accurate or more definite information about dwarfs of this species. The Akka resemble the majority of

the Monbuttoo in having brown hair, other nations of a reddish tone of complexion not sharing this peculiarity.

Taking, as I have said, my little *protégé* Nsewue as a fair type of the Akka in general, I will proceed to enumerate the most prominent marks in their common appearance.

The head of the Akka is large, and out of proportion to the weak, thin neck on which it is balanced. The shape of the shoulders is peculiar, differing entirely from that of other negroes in a way that may probably be accounted for by the unusual scope required for the action of the shoulder-blades; the arms are lanky; and altogether the upper portion of the body has a measurement disproportionately long. The superior region of the chest is flat and much contracted, but it widens out below to support the huge hanging belly, which gives them, however aged, the remarkable appearance of Arabian or Egyptian children. The look of the Akka from behind is very singular. Their body seeming then to form a curve so regular and defined that it is almost like a letter S; this is probably to be accounted for by an exceptional suppleness in the lower joints of the spine, since after a full meal the centre of gravity is shifted, and the curve of the back accordingly becomes more or less concave. All the various personal traits of the Akka to which I have thus referred are illustrated very plainly in Fritsch's work by the figure (No. 69) which represents an old Bushman.

The joints of the legs are angular and projecting, except that the knees are plump and round. Unlike other Africans, who ordinarily walk with their feet straight, the Akka turn them somewhat inward. I hardly know how to describe their waddling; every step they take is accompanied by a lurch that seems to affect all their limbs alike; and Nsewue could never manage to carry a full dish for any distance without spilling at least a portion of its contents.

Of all their members their hands were undoubtedly the best formed. These might really be pronounced elegant,

although I do not mean that they were in the least like the long narrow ladies' hands that are so lauded in romance, but which Carl Vogt has characterised as appropriate to the monkey type. Nothing about my poor little favourite ever excited my admiration to the same degree as his pretty little hands, and so attentively have I studied every part of his singular form that not even the smallest detail has escaped my memory.

But all the peculiarities of the race culminate in the shape of the skull and in the physiognomical character of the head. As matter of fact, history has not exhibited that any general degeneracy in a nation has ever been attended by a general decrease in a people's stature; but still it is quite possible that the peculiarities I have already mentioned might originate in some modification of the way of living. Any attempt, however, to attribute the formation of the skull to the effects either of circumstance, of food, or of climate must at once be rejected as inadmissible. The most noticeable points in the structure of the heads of the Akka is their high degree of *prognathie*. The two portraits that are given exhibit facial angles of 60° and 66° respectively. Besides this they are remarkable for the snout-like projection of the jaw with an unprotruding chin, and for the wide skull which is almost spherical, and which has a deep indentation at the base of the nose. These leading resemblances indubitably exist between the Akka and the Bushmen; and where the general similarity is so great, all minor discrepancies must sink into insignificance.

All the accounts of the South African Bushmen agree in representing that their eyes are small and their eyelids contracted. "Their eyes," says Lichtenstein, "are small, deeply set, and so compressed as to be scarcely visible." Fritsch lays special stress upon this peculiarity of the Bushmen, but at the same time draws attention to the likeness of expression between them and the Hottentots, who otherwise differ from

them so widely. Now the Akka, on the other hand, have large eyes, wide open, so as to give them the bird-like appearance of Azteks; and does not Bomby's portrait,* I may ask, recall the Azteks who a few years ago were exhibited in Europe? Amid the multitude of resemblances this may be said to be the only important difference between the Akka and the Bushmen, and probably even this may be accounted for as being the effect either of food or climate, in the same way as the weather-beaten countenance of the mariner may be attributed to the life of exposure that he has led.

Setting aside, however, this diversity with regard to the eyes, the heads of the Akka and the Bushmen will be found to present various points of similarity in other respects. The Akka are distinguished from all other nations of Central Africa by the huge size of the ear. Now, however small, in an æsthetic sense, the negroes' pretensions to any beauty may ordinarily be supposed to be, it must be conceded that they can vie with any race whatever in the elegance and symmetrical shape of their ears; but no share of this grace can be assigned either to the Bushmen or to the Akka.

The lips project in a way that corresponds completely with the projecting jaw. They are long and convex; they do not overlap, and are not so thick as those of the generality of negroes. What really suggests the resemblance to an ape is the sharply-defined outline of the gaping mouth; for the pouting lips of most negroes convey no idea at all of relationship with inferior animals. These gaping lips, again, are possessed by the Akka in common with the Bushmen, whose profiles may be seen in the illustrations given by Fritsch; they are not found at all amongst the Monbuttoo.

The continual changes of expression which, as Lichtenstein observes, play upon the countenance and render the Bushmen like apes rather than human beings are exhibited to a

* *Vide antè*, p. 130.

very remarkable degree by the Akka. The twitching of the eyebrows (in this case still more animated by the brightness of the eyes), the rapid gestures with the hands and feet while talking, the incessant wagging and nodding of the head, all combine to give a very grotesque appearance to the little people, and serve to explain the fund of amusement derived from the visit of Adimokoo.

Of the language of the Akka I must confess my entire ignorance, having lost the few notes that I possessed. I remember that I was much struck by the inarticulateness of the pronunciation. During the year and a half that my *protégé* was domesticated with me he was unable to learn sufficient Arabic to make himself understood; in this respect he was very different to the other natives about me, who made themselves masters of a copious vocabulary. He never advanced beyond stammering out a few Bongo phrases, which no one except myself and a few of my own people could comprehend.

Although I was informed that circumcision was practised by the Akka, I could never ascertain whether it was really an indigenous custom, or whether it was merely borrowed from the Monbutto, and so adopted by such of the Akka as had settled near the court of Munza.

In acuteness, dexterity, and it must be added in cunning, the Akka far surpass the Monbutto. They are *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, a nation of hunters. The cunning, however, which they display is but the outward expression of an inner impulse which seems to prompt them to find a delight in wickedness. Nsewue was always fond of torturing animals, and took a special pleasure in throwing arrows at the dogs by night. During the period in which we were involved in war, and while my servants were almost beside themselves with anxiety, nothing afforded him greater amusement than to play with the heads that had been severed from the slain A-Banga; and when I boiled some of the skulls his delight knew no bounds; he rushed about the camp shouting,

"Bakinda,* nova? Bakinda he he koto" (Where is Bakinda? Bakinda is in the pot!) Such a people as this would naturally excel in the inventive faculty for laying traps and snares for game.

Like the Obongo and the Bushmen, as I myself experienced during my first *rencontre* with Adimokoo, the Akka are extremely shy with other men.

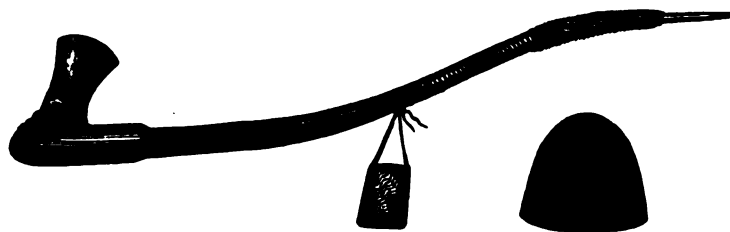
Their only domestic animals are poultry; and it struck me as a coincidence somewhat curious that one of the Pompeian mosaics which I saw in the National Museum at Naples represents the Pygmies in the midst of their little houses, which are depicted as full of common fowls.

It is notorious that the natives of South Africa in general have vowed death and destruction against the Bushmen, reckoning them as incorrigibly wild and in no way superior to apes of the most dangerous character. Now the dwarfs of Central Africa, although they fall little short of the Bushmen in natural maliciousness, are not regarded as mischievous fiends who must be exterminated like a brood of adders, but they are considered rather as a sort of benevolent spirits or mandrakes who are in no way detrimental. They are of assistance to the Monbuttoo in securing them a more abundant produce from the chase, and so they enjoy the protection of their neighbours very much in the same way as (according to Du Chaillu) the Obongo enjoy the protection of the Ashango. These amicable relations, however, would not be possible but for the reason that the Monbuttoo possess no herds. If the Monbuttoo were a cattle-breeding people, it cannot be doubted that the Akka would consider all their animals as game, and could not deny themselves the delight of driving their spears into the flanks of every beast they could get near, and by these tactics would very soon convert their guardians into enemies.

* "Bakinda," is a mere derisive nickname.

Munza supplies all the Akka who have settled near him with the best of diet, and Nsewue was never weary of descanting in praise of the flasks of beer, the plantain wine, the ears of corn, and all the other delicacies with which his people were feasted.

I will only add that a debt of gratitude is due from the students of ethnology to the Monbuttoë king, who has been instrumental in preserving this remnant of a declining race until the time has come for the very heart of Africa to be laid open.



Dinka Pipe. (See description, vol. i., p. 292.)

CHAPTER XVII.

Return to the North. Tikkitikki's reluctance to start. Passage of the Gadda. Sounding the Keebaly. The river Kahpily. Cataracts of the Keebaly. Kubby's refusal of boats. Our impatience. Crowds of hippopotamuses. Possibility of fording the river. Origin and connection of the Keebaly. Division of highland and lowland. Geographical expressions of Arabs and Nubians. Mohammedan perversions. Return to Nembey. Bivouac in the border-wilderness. Eating wax. The Niam-niam declare war. Parley with the enemy. My mistrust of the guides. Treacherous attack on Mohammed. Mohammed's dangerous wound. Open war. Detruncated heads. Effect of arrows. Mohammed's defiance. Attack on the abattis. Pursuit of the enemy. Inexplicable appearance of 10,000 men. Wando's unpropitious omen. My Niam-niam and their oracle. Mohammed's speedy cure. Solar phenomenon. Dogs barbarously speared. Women captured. Niam-niam affection for their wives. Calamus. Upper course of the Mbrwole. Fresh captive. Her composure. Alteration in scenery. Arrival at the Nabambisso.

AFTER a sojourn of three weeks, the 12th of April was fixed for the raising of our camp and for the departure of our caravan from the residence of the Monbuttoo king.

For myself it was with a sad and heavy heart that I had to begin retracing my steps towards the north. How bitter was my disappointment may well be imagined. I could not be otherwise than aware that I was leaving behind my only chance of answering some of those important questions that might be propounded to me; and my regret was aggravated by the conviction that a journey comparatively short would now have brought me to the sources of the three great rivers of the west, the only streams that are absolutely closed to our geographical knowledge, viz, the Benwe, the Ogawai, and the Congo. Distant as I was hardly more than 450

miles from the limit that had been reached by Livingstone, I could discern, as I fondly imagined, from Munza's residence, a path clearly open towards the south-west which would conduct me to the Congo and to the states of the mighty Mwata Yanvo; it appeared to me to be a path that, once explored, would solve the remaining problems of the heart of Africa as decidedly as the sword of Alexander severed the Gordian knot, and now, just when there was only one more district to be traversed and that not larger than what we had already passed since leaving the Gazelle, to be obliged to abandon further progress and to leave the mysterious secrets still unravelled was a hardship to which it was impossible patiently to submit. But there was no alternative, and, however reluctantly, I had to yield.

I have already spoken of the various obstacles to any further advance; I must, however, again insist upon my conviction that any single traveller, provided he had not an undue proportion of flesh (for to be fat would be fatal), might march on unhindered down the Welle as far as Baghirmy, since the population was all well disposed enough as far as regards the white man. But any attempt to carry on an entire caravan in that direction would have met with the most strenuous opposition on the part of King Munza; his indirect influence might have enabled travellers to descend as far to the south as lat. 2° N.; but for this his sanction would have had to be purchased by an enormous contribution of copper.

The first event of the morning of our start occasioned no small stir amongst the Nubians. Mohammed Aboo Sammat had established a Seriba in the place, for the garrisoning of which twenty-eight men had to be left behind, and several hours elapsed before the necessary conscription could be accomplished. Apart from myself, depressed as I was by my disappointment, every one else was elated at the prospect of returning, so that no penalty could be considered much

heavier than being compelled to tarry in this remote region for one or two years, and possibly longer, to be the associates of cannibals; each man accordingly upon whom the unlucky destiny chanced to fall received his orders to remain with the loudest murmurs of dissatisfaction, and the outcry and contention threatened to be interminable. At length, by cajoling, by bribing, by promises of ample pay, and, it must be added, by the representation of the lives of frolic they would lead with the Monbuttoo women, the malcontents were persuaded unwillingly to acquiesce in their fate.

It was noon before the column was actually in motion. The Nubians parted from their companions with the most touching embraces; the crowds of chattering Monbuttoo surrounded the encampment and watched with vivid interest the thousand gestures of farewell, whilst the negro-bearers, silent and stolid as ever, set forward on their way.

During this parting scene my little Tikkitikki (as the Niam-niam called the Pygmy who had been presented to me a few days previously) was seized with an apparent fit of home sickness; he set up such a dismal howling and sobbed so bitterly that I confess I was for a while undecided whether I would really carry him away, but I soon discovered that it was only the uninitiated who could be imposed upon by his behaviour. He was not bewailing the loss of his home, for he was utterly ignorant as to where that home had been; neither was he deploring his separation from his kinsfolk, for they stood by, gesticulating wildly, and only mocked at his distress. The fact was, he was influenced solely by his dread of strangers. He was in mortal fear of being eaten up. It very rarely happens among the Monbuttoo that natives are surrendered to the Nubians for slaves: the occasion therefore of a present being made of a human creature would only too readily suggest the thought that some ulterior destination for cannibal purposes was in view. Altogether inadequate to appease Tikkitikki's fears as to his

approaching fate was the gorgeous silk jacket in which I arrayed him, and it was with no little satisfaction that I found I could pacify him by offering him the choicest morsels that I could procure for him to eat. After spending a few days with me in my tent, and finding himself treated with all the dainties that the country could produce, he forgot his troubles, laid aside his apprehensions, and became as happy as a little prince.

From the splendid thickets upon the banks of the rivulets which streamed across our path I gathered all the specimens I could of the flora of this distant land, and all along our return journey I lost no available opportunity of contributing any novelty to my botanical store.

For about five miles we followed the route by which we had arrived, proceeding in a north-easterly direction until we reached the mounds of gneiss that lay before the third stream. Making a little *détour* to the left I mounted the eminences, which were crowned with some fine fig-trees, whence I could watch our long caravan winding amongst the plantain-groves; now and then my view of the *cortège* would be obstructed by some rising oil-palms, and finally the train would disappear in the obscurity of the gallery-forest. The streams were now much swollen, and their passage entailed not only a considerable loss of time but some trial of strength. The paths were so narrow that we were compelled to proceed in single file, not unfrequently being obliged to halt in places where the shadows of the forest were far too light to afford us any protection from the raging heat. Upon these occasions I found a draught from a calabash of plantain-wine very refreshing. Every now and then I had recourse to a pipe. Altogether, however, in spite of its inconveniences the journey was through scenery so charming that it could not be otherwise than enjoyable.

After crossing the third brook we made a turn to the right, thus entering upon a way that was new to us. Having

traversed an open steppe along the edge of a gallery extending to the north-east, we encamped at nightfall at a farmstead near the river Gadda. Half-an-hour's march in the morning brought us to the river bank.

In its dimensions the Gadda resembles the Wow just above its junction with the Dyoor, but it does not exhibit the same periodical changes in the volume of its waters; its bed remains full throughout the year, and at this date (April 13th) I found that it was 155 feet wide and but 3 feet deep, its velocity being 57 feet in a minute. The banks were bounded by light woods, and the soil not being subject to any further inundations had only a gentle slope; the flood-marks on the shore proved the difference between the highest and lowest conditions of the river to be 20 feet. The Gadda has its source far to the south-east, and, flowing across the dominions of the Monbuttoo king Degberra, joins the Keebaly: the united streams then receive the name of the Welle.

Without unnecessary loss of time we forded the sandy river-bed, and, continuing our march for about another half hour, arrived at the left bank of the Keebaly. The river here exhibited much the same character as the Welle at the spot where we had forded it upon our outward journey, but I presume it was somewhat narrower, as by trigonometrical measurement I found that its width was only 325 feet.

By the orders of the king boats were in readiness to convey the caravan across, and the ferrymen did their work so well and quickly that the entire passage was accomplished in three hours. While the transit was being effected I took the opportunity of embarking in a canoe for the purpose of estimating the depth and velocity of the stream, an operation in which I was materially assisted by the greater experience of my servant Mohammed Ameen. In the same way as I noticed on the Welle, the current was much stronger on the northern or right shore; by throwing a gourd upon the flood

and observing the number of feet it progressed in a minute, I estimated the ratio of the currents upon the opposite banks to be as 15:19. The depth was between 12 and 13 feet, and there were neither rocks nor sand-banks in this part of the river-bed.

As I stood in the long grass superintending the stowage of the baggage, I was very considerably inconvenienced by the inquisitiveness of the natives, who persisted in thronging close around. In order to get free from their intrusion I was glad to resort to all kinds of artifices, such as throwing some lighted touchwood amongst them, and treating them to a few cartridges. After the last bearer had started and they observed that I still continued to paddle up and down the stream, their curiosity knew no bounds. Trusting to the superiority of our firearms and the protection of my own servants, I felt perfectly secure and enjoyed the bewildered surprise with which the natives who crowded the banks surveyed our evolutions. The dexterous swimming and diving of my Nubians excited the liveliest interest, and every time the sounding-lead was dipped it was watched as eagerly as if it were about to draw forth from the deep some treasure of the Nibelungen.

Northward again. We passed the farmsteads of the local overseer Parra, crossed the brook Mboolah, and pitched our camp at a hamlet but a few miles from the stream. The remainder of the day I spent in botanizing. I made my way into the thickets, and found some splendid representatives of such large-leaved plants as the philodendra, calladia, and marantha, which gleamed with a metallic sheen. The overseer was very liberal: he supplied us freely with beer, and the greater part of the night was spent in friendly intercourse with the natives, who found, as ever, my hair and my lucifers to be an unfailing source of interest. Myself the people designated as "a good man," and, satisfied that I had come from the skies, they interpreted my arrival as a token of peace and happiness.

Our road on the following day lay through a country that was generally open, and we had no stream to cross until we reached the brook Bumba, near the village of Bongwa. Here we regained our former route. The country was perfectly safe, and I was accordingly able to march with my own people in the rear of the caravan, and devote my attention to my botanical researches. The hamlets that we passed were pleasant resting-places, and as we halted under the welcome shade of the foliage, the natives rarely failed to hasten out and bring fresh plantains for our refreshment.

At Bongwa we made a halt for a whole day, for the purpose of giving the smiths an opportunity of working, as it was necessary for our copper bars to be transformed into some thousands of rings. For my own part I found ample employment in sketching, and in adding what I could to my store of curiosities. The victualling of the caravan, moreover, had become a matter of increased difficulty; it was now the season for planting out, and all the roots and tubers which the natives had spared from the preceding year had just been put into the ground, so that there was a general scarcity of provisions; a fact that was brought home to our own experience, when we found that the yams that were supplied to us had already commenced throwing out their fresh sprouts.

Retracing our former track we crossed by fording the six approximate streams that it may be remembered I noticed on our advance. On our arrival at Nembey's residence, we at once found shelter in the camp-huts that had been erected at our last visit, and which were still in a very fair state of preservation. I took a long ramble and made a careful inspection of the plantations of sugar-cane in the adjoining wildernesses upon the river-banks; my first impression was that the canes were a rank spontaneous growth, but I was distinctly and repeatedly assured that they were nowhere, by

any chance, found wild, and would not thrive without the aid of man.

Wando's territory was before us. It now became a matter of serious consideration how our progress across that hostile district should be accomplished. Mohammed's first suggestion was that we should take a circuitous route far to the east, and then that he should himself return with his armed forces strengthened by a complement from his head Seriba on the Nabambisso, and thus proceed to rescue the store of ivory that had been entrusted to Wando's care. To this scheme no doubt there were various objections. The new route would be entirely unknown to the Nubians, and as, beyond a question, it would lead across wildernesses utterly void of any population, the caravan would necessarily have to endure no small measure of privation. In any case trustworthy guides would be necessary in order that the caravan might arrive at its destination in any seasonable time. Notwithstanding all difficulties, Mohammed resolved to attempt to penetrate to the eastern Monbuttoo country, although for this purpose we should be obliged to recross the Keebaly. Nembey was tributary to Degberra, the king of the eastern Monbuttoo, and it had been necessary for Mohammed thus to proceed in the first place to his village; the fact being that the enmity between Munza and Degberra was so bitter that there was no possibility of passing *directly* from the territory of one to that of the other. We started accordingly, and the whole train having crossed the brook Kussumbo, we turned to the south-east along an open steppe, and proceeded for about half a league until we reached a deep hollow from which there issued one of the smaller tributaries of the Kussumbo. This hollow was formed by one of the landslips so common in this part of Africa, caused by the gradual washing away from below of the ferruginous swamp-ore, which was here at least 50 feet thick. The depth of the defile itself was about 80 feet; its sides were enveloped

in dense bushes, and the masses of rock which were quite homogeneous were adorned with a covering of hitherto unknown fern of the genus *adiantum*, which, in spots like this, clothes the reeking stones with a complete down of feathery fronds.

Another half league across the steppe and I was surprised to find that we were on the banks of a copious river that about eight miles to the south-west joined the Keebaly. Astonished at the sight of the rushing waters I turned to my Monbuttoo guide, and, availing myself of the few words in his dialect with which I was familiar, I asked him "*Na eggu rukodassi?*" (What do you call that river?) From his reply I discovered that it was the Kahpily, not the Keebaly. The similar sound of the names of these two collateral streams warned me afresh how carefully the traveller should render the names of rivers which he hears; time passes on and the names of places are changed with their chiefs, but the names of their rivers are handed on by the Africans from generation to generation as long as their language and nationality remain unaltered;* only where these change do the names of the rivers fall into oblivion. The Kahpily has a rapid current from north-east to south-west; its depth here was only 4 feet, but its bed, 40 feet in width, and its steep rocky walls, 40 feet in height, demonstrated that this important stream must be subject to a considerable increase in its volume. In my own mind I was convinced that all these rivers, meeting within so limited an area, must have their sources in some mountain region at no great distance, little

* It may be objected that this theory does not hold good for many parts of Central Africa. Barth (vol. iii., p. 266) gives twelve instances to prove that all the tribes of the Central Soudan have no other distinctions for any of their streams beyond the general terms of "water" or river. But I must be permitted to urge that the Arabs of the Eastern Soudan have their Athara, Sobat, &c. At any rate, the people amongst whom I travelled, especially the Niam-niam and the Monbuttoo, formed remarkable exceptions, for they invariably gave all localities the names of the adjacent rivers or brooks.

as the aspect of the surrounding country seemed to warrant the supposition. It was evident to my mind that the Kahl-pily must rise near the source-streams of the Dyoor, and from a mountain-chain extending to the south-east from Baginze, a district which would appear to be the nucleus of a whole series of source-streams that flow thence to the north and west.

While the caravan was being carefully conducted across the river by means of an immense stem of a tree that stretched over from bank to bank, I enjoyed a refreshing bath in the foaming waters. Proceeding next in the direction of E.S.E., we passed over a level steppe. As we approached the river that next intercepted us we found that we were on the recent track of a lion; the vestiges in the red clay were all so well-defined that the natives, with their keen hunting instinct, pronounced without hesitation that they had been made by an aged male. The steppes extend for a long distance along the right bank of the Keebaly without being relieved by human habitations, and the district naturally abounds with game. Herds of leucotis antelopes animated the plain and tempted me to devote an hour to the chase. Drenched with perspiration, almost as if I were in the tumult of a battle, and aimlessly following the impulse of the moment, I pushed my way through the tall savannah-grass. Hunting in Africa may be fairly described to be one continual whirl and scramble; the very abundance of game confuses the vision; one object of attraction rises rapidly after another, and baffles any attempt at deliberation. After considerable perseverance I succeeded in bringing down a buck antelope, much to the astonishment of the natives, who were watching my movements from the road, and persisted to the last in questioning the efficiency of my firearms. I hit a second antelope, but did not kill it. It was pursued by the natives for many miles, and only just before sunset did they succeed in surrounding it so that they

could despatch it by means of their lances. In the middle of the night I was called up, and naturally supposed that something serious had transpired, but I soon discovered that the reason why my rest had been disturbed was merely that I might be shown the mark of my bullet in the animal's thigh. The men insisted upon my feeling the depth of the wound with my finger, and seemed unable to comprehend that they were showing me nothing that was new.

A little rivulet, called the Kambeley, wound down a hollow incline of which the sides were indented with many a vale of different level. The sides of the hollow were covered for a considerable height with a tangled jungle from which the great leaves of the trumpet-tree (*Cecropia*) rose like brilliant fans; and interwoven amongst its thickets there was a new species of palm, something akin to the rotang, of which every leaf terminated in a long spray, armed with prickles, like a pike-hook. From this palm the Monbuttoo cut canes as thick as their arms, which are reputed to be so difficult to break that they are not unfrequently used as a criterion in testing strength. Above the primeval wood the narrow valley was crowned with a number of small and graceful huts. Altogether the spot was so romantic and wild, and yet withal it had an air of so much snug and cosy comfort, that it seemed to entice one to choose it for his home.

At this point our caravan was joined by a party of people sent by Kubby, one of Degberra's sub-chieftains, from beyond the Keebaly, to open ivory transactions with Mohammed, a circumstance that boded us no good, and forbade us from being in any way sanguine of a hospitable reception from Kubby. This half-way meeting was only a blind; it was a pretext to prevent us from alleging that his subsequent refusal to allow us to cross the river was actuated by any hostile motive. An African chief always likes to have a loophole as long as it is doubtful whether peace is preferable to war.

The ground, with its continual indentations, slanted gradually downwards as we approached the great river. Several ravines and clefts with their flowing source-springs had to be traversed before we reached the river bank, and even then, with the roar of the cataract close beside us, we were obliged to trace and retrace our steps up and down the shore before we could find a suitable place for an encampment.

At this date (April 18th) the Keebaly filled a bed more than 1200 feet in width. The main current followed the left or southern shore, along which a great bank of gneiss lay exposed, now stretched out in wide flats, and now piled up in countless fragments like huge lumps of ice. The extreme height of this bank never exceeded fifty feet, while the northern bank, on which we had our station, was covered with the most splendid forest and rose to a height of at least a hundred feet. Higher up, the stream was parted into numerous channels, and amidst these was a profusion of woody islands, against which the foaming waters broke, throwing the sparkle of their spray into the darkness of the thicket.* The channels appeared to be all quite navigable, although the sound of the rapids could be distinctly heard. "Kissingah" is the general name by which these rapids are distinguished; but the Monbuttoo are accustomed simply to refer to them as "the islands." We could observe the conical roofs of the fishing-huts peeping out from amidst the foliage, and noticed the canoes of the unfriendly natives darting rapidly across from one islet to another. Not one, however, of these fishing-boats came near us; nor was there the least indication of the coming of any of Kubby's messengers to assist us in our passage across the stream. We became aware only too soon of a resolution to obstruct our progress, the cause of which was readily to be explained.

* The accompanying drawing, taken on the spot, will convey a correct idea of the scene.

the first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the
the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the
the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the
the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the
the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the
the twentieth is the fact that the
the twenty-first is the fact that the
the twenty-second is the fact that the
the twenty-third is the fact that the
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the
the twenty-fifth is the fact that the
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the
the twenty-eighth is the fact that the
the twenty-ninth is the fact that the
the thirtieth is the fact that the
the thirty-first is the fact that the
the thirty-second is the fact that the
the thirty-third is the fact that the
the thirty-fourth is the fact that the
the thirty-fifth is the fact that the
the thirty-sixth is the fact that the
the thirty-seventh is the fact that the
the thirty-eighth is the fact that the
the thirty-ninth is the fact that the
the fortieth is the fact that the
the forty-first is the fact that the
the forty-second is the fact that the
the forty-third is the fact that the
the forty-fourth is the fact that the
the forty-fifth is the fact that the
the forty-sixth is the fact that the
the forty-seventh is the fact that the
the forty-eighth is the fact that the
the forty-ninth is the fact that the
the fiftieth is the fact that the
the fifty-first is the fact that the
the fifty-second is the fact that the
the fifty-third is the fact that the
the fifty-fourth is the fact that the
the fifty-fifth is the fact that the
the fifty-sixth is the fact that the
the fifty-seventh is the fact that the
the fifty-eighth is the fact that the
the fifty-ninth is the fact that the
the sixtieth is the fact that the
the sixty-first is the fact that the
the sixty-second is the fact that the
the sixty-third is the fact that the
the sixty-fourth is the fact that the
the sixty-fifth is the fact that the
the sixty-sixth is the fact that the
the sixty-seventh is the fact that the
the sixty-eighth is the fact that the
the sixty-ninth is the fact that the
the seventieth is the fact that the
the seventy-first is the fact that the
the seventy-second is the fact that the
the seventy-third is the fact that the
the seventy-fourth is the fact that the
the seventy-fifth is the fact that the
the seventy-sixth is the fact that the
the seventy-seventh is the fact that the
the seventy-eighth is the fact that the
the seventy-ninth is the fact that the
the eightieth is the fact that the
the eighty-first is the fact that the
the eighty-second is the fact that the
the eighty-third is the fact that the
the eighty-fourth is the fact that the
the eighty-fifth is the fact that the
the eighty-sixth is the fact that the
the eighty-seventh is the fact that the
the eighty-eighth is the fact that the
the eighty-ninth is the fact that the
the ninetieth is the fact that the
the ninety-first is the fact that the
the ninety-second is the fact that the
the ninety-third is the fact that the
the ninety-fourth is the fact that the
the ninety-fifth is the fact that the
the ninety-sixth is the fact that the
the ninety-seventh is the fact that the
the ninety-eighth is the fact that the
the ninety-ninth is the fact that the
the hundredth is the fact that the



VIEW ON THE KEBBALY, NEAR KUBBY.

- Poncet's (subsequently Ghattas's) company had a Seriba in Kubby's district, and the Nubians who had been left in charge had succeeded in inducing the chief to refuse us the assistance of his boats, for no other reason whatever than that they feared Mohammed's competition with themselves, and that they were eager to monopolize the entire ivory-trade of the district.

For the next day we waited on. No boats arrived. This waste of time suited the plans neither of Mohammed nor of myself. Our provisions, moreover, were getting low. There was no prospect of revictualling. Accordingly our resolution was taken: without delay we would return to Nembey.

During the day of indecision, I exerted myself as best I could to explore the wildernesses of the Keebaly. My attention was chiefly attracted by a fragrant crinum, in shape and size resembling a white lily. The diversity of the trees seemed almost endless, and I was especially amazed at the variety of the anonacæ and fig-trees, of which I found little short of forty species.

An infallible proof of the size and copiousness of the river was afforded by the number of hippopotamuses that were floundering about. I amused myself by clambering along the smooth rocks that projected into the water, and testing my bullets on the hides of the unwieldy brutes; having an ample store of ammunition, for which there did not seem to be much demand in the way of regular hunting, I fired away over the surface of the water, for the hour together. My sport created a vivid sensation amongst the natives upon the opposite bank, for although they had the prudence to keep carefully out of sight, they could not resist surreptitiously spying at our camp from behind their bushes; they manifested their surprise at the enormous range covered by my rifles, being acquainted only with the guns of the Nubians, the best of which could not carry half the distance.

The waters of the Keebaly have the repute of affording a

home to a very remarkable animal that has never been observed in any of the streams that rise from the Nile basin. The Nubians, who have a habit of calling anything with which they are not familiar by whatever name may come uppermost at the moment, have given this animal the designation of a "Kharoof-el-bahr," or river-sheep; they describe it in such a way that there can be little doubt that it is a manatus or lamantin (probably *M. Vogellii*), which is so frequently found in the rivers of Western Africa that flow into the Atlantic. My short and unsettled sojourn on the Keebaly prohibited me from securing, out of these tropical source-streams, a specimen of this strange representative of the Sirenia family.

I am perfectly certain that if Mohammed had pleased he could have forced his way across the river. The dexterous Nubians had but to swim over with their guns upon their heads, and they could readily have taken possession of the canoes which, too large and cumbrous to be transported by land, were concealed in the thickets upon the opposite shore. I merely mention this to illustrate my opinion that, with a company of Nubians, the great African rivers in themselves offer no insuperable obstacles to a resolute traveller.

As already affirmed, the Keebaly is to be considered as the main stream of the river that, in its lower course, is known as the Welle. Before quitting it we may do well to give our brief attention to the geographical questions that are associated with this discovery.

In the accounts collected from his agents, and published by Poncet, the river is called the Boora or Baboora;* but as I never heard this name, I can only surmise that Poncet's informants had somehow misunderstood or misinterpreted the regular name Keebaly or Keebary. In the same way I

* In many Central African dialects, such as the Baghirmy and Bongo, the monosyllable "ba" means "river."

never heard anything of a king mentioned under the name of Kagooma, or of a tribe called the Onguroo. The Nubians seem never to recollect the native names of rivers, and invariably pronounce all names whatever most incorrectly; the information derived from that quarter is of little value to the geographer, and it is very much to be regretted that the most travelled and experienced leaders of the Khartoom expeditions should have failed so much in acquiring definite details; had it been otherwise, their knowledge would have been of great assistance in laying down more complete and accurate maps of the country.

The probability that the Keebaly and the Welle are identical with the upper course of the Shary appears to become at once almost a positive certainty when we ask the counter-question, "If this is not the Shary, whence does the Shary come?" All that we know and all that we do not know about the north and north-western districts conspire to satisfy us that in that direction there is neither a sufficient reservoir, nor an adequate space, for the development of a network of streams large enough to form a river which is half a mile broad at its mouth, and which fills a lake as large as the whole of Belgium. The waters of the Welle, however, do not rise till April, while the Shary occasionally rises in March. In order to explain this earlier rising of the lower river, we seem to be compelled to adopt the supposition that there must be some *second* main stream which issues from a latitude more southerly than the Keebaly. Quite insignificant are the two affluents, the Nalobey and the Nomayo, which the river receives on the left from the south of Munza's territory.

There can be little doubt about the real origin of the Keebaly. Although, as delineated on my map, the river has a position as though it issued directly from the north-west angle of the Mwootan Lake (Albert Nyanza), nothing was more remote from my intention than to jump to such a

precipitate conclusion; there was nothing either in the nature of the river and its tributaries, or in the information received from the various natives, which could, in any way, justify such a hypothesis. On the contrary, I am quite convinced of the correctness of Baker's statement. I entirely concur with his view that Lake Mwootan is the great basin of the Nile, and that the Bahr-el-Gebel is its only outlet. That Lake Mwootan, simply on account of its abundance of water, must necessarily have *several* outlets, and that the Ayi (the river which Baker calls the Yè) is one of those outlets, is only a geographical chimera which, in the Old World at least, has no analogy, and which would only be admitted to the theories of *dilettanti*. According to Baker's measurement Lake Mwootan (Albert Nyanza) is 2720 feet above the level of the sea. But by comparing the rapids of the Keebaly with the height of Munza's residence (2707 feet), which has been verified by the most rigid scientific appliances, I have ascertained that they are almost on the same level as the lake. The river and the lake being thus at the same altitude constitutes decisive evidence that the Keebaly does not issue from the lake, from which it is distant about 170 miles.

All the rivers that were embraced within the compass of my journey appeared to me to have their source in the spur of the Galla-Abyssinian highlands, through which the Bahr-el-Gebel passes in the Madi country. Those which belong to the Nile system would seem to spring from the mountains of Koshi on the north of Lake Mwootan, whilst those which are tributary to the Shary have their source in what Baker designates the Blue Mountains, which he observed to the north-west of the lake. Including the Mfumbiro group on the north of Lake Tanganyika—that group which under Speke's name of "the Mountains of the Moon," has obtained a certain geographical notoriety—this mountain system apparently forms a section of that conspicuous terrace-chain

which (with the only exceptions of the Niger source-territory and the lofty isolated coast ranges by the equator) divides the continent of Africa, not according to the prevailing idea into a northern and southern, but into an eastward and westward half of highland and lowland. The highland embraces a large number of inland lakes, some of which allow their waters to escape most diffusely, whilst others appear to have no outlet at all. Many of these lakes are found close to the western ridge of the high ground. Besides the Keebaly, the Lualaba amongst other rivers may be named as forcing its way through the mountains of Rua, and apparently flowing in a westerly direction towards the lowland. If we imagine a prolonged line to cut the entire continent from Massowa to Mossamedes, it would coincide almost precisely with the terrace-chain of which I have spoken; it would answer very much to a corresponding line of division between the highlands and lowlands of South America which, like an Africa turned right over, has its coast-chain on the western side.

Nurtured as I had been upon the banks of the Dūna, my earliest memories were associated with the aspect of a majestic river with its foaming waves, and it was consequently with no ordinary pleasure that I gazed upon this stream which hitherto no white man had ever beheld. I retain the most vivid recollection of the last evening that I spent upon the banks of the Keebaly, when both time and place contributed to provoke a geographical discussion. The Nubians are always ready to talk about rivers. They will enlarge freely upon their source, their aspect, and their connection; but, carried away by their imagination, they never fail to represent their own incomparable Nile as *par excellence* the river of rivers, the very spring and reservoir of all the goodliest waters of the earth. A compendium of all their geographical delusions would form an interesting study, and might furnish a key to many antiquated traditions. It is well known that

the Nubians and Arabians always give the name of "island" to the projecting point of land which lies at the confluence of any two rivers; thus Sennaar would be described as the "island" between the White and the Blue Nile; and it was in the same sense that the ancients applied the name to Meroë, the land between the Nile and the Atbara. It is a matter of remark again that the Nubians are accustomed to invert, as it were, the upward and downward courses of a stream, and to describe the confluence of two rivers as the separation of the main stream into two branches. This habit may possibly account for the frequent mention of "arms" in all their descriptions of their rivers: it is in accordance moreover with the practice of the ancients, who referred to the junction of the White and Blue Nile at Khartoom as a partition of the entire stream, "*ubi Nilus iterum bifurcus*;" a notion probably only derived from the habitual expressions of the natives which would thus appear to have remained unaltered for many centuries.

A corresponding difference between the Nubian mode of expression and our own is observable in all their allusions to the motions of rivers, and they would speak, for example, of the Nile as going *towards*, and not as descending *from* the mountains. On the bank of the Keebaly I sat discussing the topic of river-systems with Mohammed Aboo Sammat and his people; but as we argued over the many hydrographical problems that were yet unsolved I detected him in the most flagrant contradictions. At length, losing my patience, I desired him to show me with his hand which way he supposed the Keebaly to flow; the whole party simultaneously motioned towards the east, and turning to the west declared that that was the direction from which the river came. Startled from my composure, I rated them soundly upon their inconsistencies. "Why, you Mussulmen," I said, "twist and turn everything upside down. We can comprehend you in nothing. What is sin with us is righteousness

with you. The day you call night.* In your Ramadan, *you* fast during the daytime; *we* do all our fasting at night. Go to a strange place and you expect the people to be the first to visit you. Go to a feast and you take the place of the host, and treat the servants to their beer. Your bridegrooms, too, you make them pay for their brides instead of taking them with a dowry of their own. You talk of what is 'pure and impure;' but for yourselves you are always dirty. Your names for colour are contradictions; 'akhdar' is green and grey; 'azrak' is both blue and black. You call your drums trumpets;† and your trumpets drums.‡ In bed you wrap up your heads and leave your feet uncovered. To tell the truth, I could go on and enumerate a hundred of your vagaries, and I can only wonder that you do not stand on your heads and eat with your feet." The incredible confusion in the ideas of this people involves the traveller in continual tedious explanations. Speke§ complains in the same way about the geographical blunders of his retinue.

We made our way back to Nembey by the same route that we had come. Before regaining the place we very narrowly escaped coming into collision with the inhabitants of some hamlets through which we passed. The entire caravan for some days past had been placed upon reduced rations, and when some of the bearers caught sight of the manioc roots that had been planted close to the dwellings, the temptation of pulling them up was too great to be resisted. The women were highly indignant, assailed the offenders lustily, and shrieked at them with the loudest imprecations. The caravan came to a standstill. As those in the rear never knew what was happening in front, Mohammed, attended by his body-guard, hurried up to inquire into the cause of the disturbance. Having ascertained the circumstances, he came to

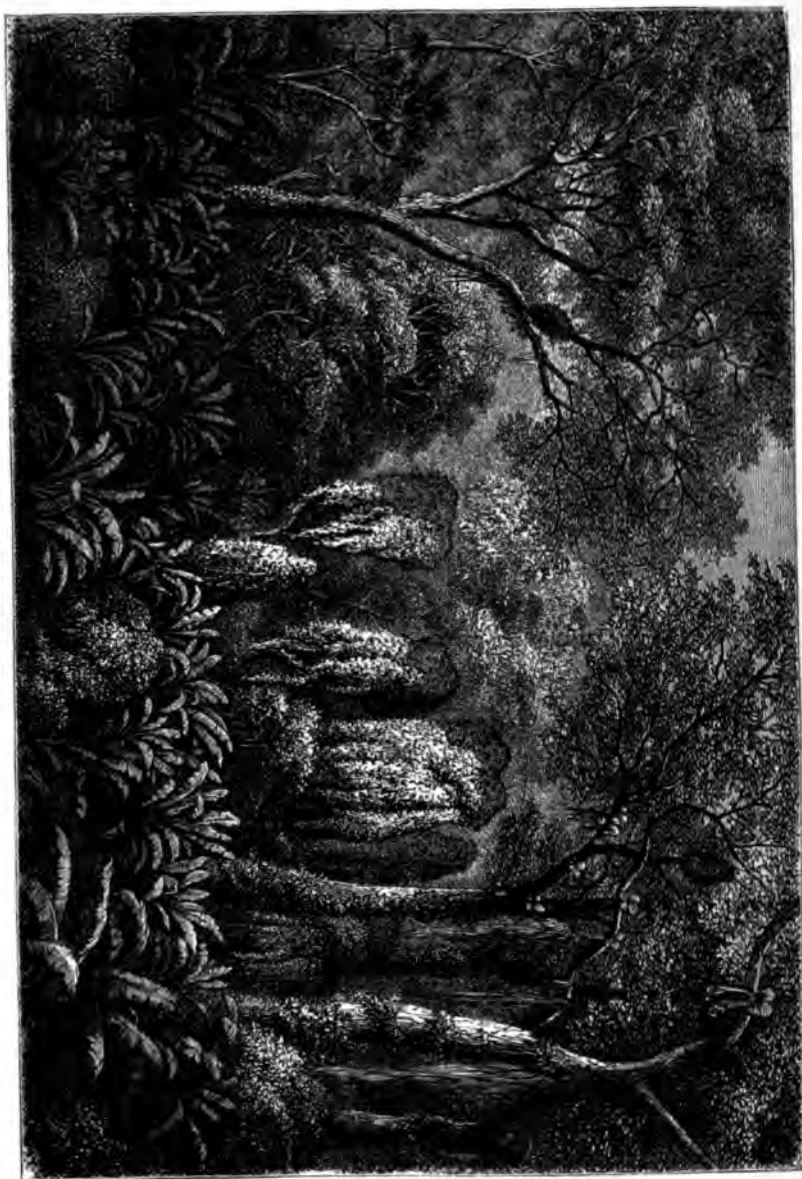
* Referring to the Soudan Arabic word "to-day," which is literally "in the night."

† Drombeta.

‡ Tamboor.

§ Vide 'Speke's Journal,' p. 90.

A GALLERY-FOREST.



The sun was still high when we made our first camp in the wilderness. We were upon the third of the gallery-brooks. Since our former visit new blossoms had unfolded themselves, and seemed to give a fresh aspect to the scene. In every quarter of the thickets, gleaming like torches, there rose the imposing clusters of the *combretum*, with its large bright-red bractæ; and, as if to rival them in splendour, every branch of the *spathodea* put forth a *thyrsus* of large orange-coloured balls.

In the midst of my enjoyment, as I was admiring the beauties all around me, I was startled by a cry, like a shout of triumph, that came from a party of our negroes who were scouring the woods in the hope of securing something good to eat. I hurried in the direction of the sound, and found the men all clustered round the stem of a tree, to which they were busily applying firebrands. Having discovered a quantity of honey in a hollow tree, they adopted the most effectual measures to secure their treasure, and very soon the honey, the wax, and the very bodies of the bees themselves were indiscriminately devoured. If any one could persuade the inhabitants of Central Africa to desist from their habit of consuming this wax, he would do no small service towards accelerating the civilization of the continent. At present, with the exception of ivory, no article of traffic from these districts repays its transport: but the inexhaustible supply of wax from these districts might be made the object of a productive trade. Hitherto Abyssinia and Benguela have been the only countries that have supplied any considerable quantities of this valuable product; yet the demand for real beeswax in the lands alone that are

lichen to which I have given the name of elephant's ear: high among the boughs are the huge dwellings of the tree-termes. Some stems, already decayed, serve as supports for immense garlands of *Mucuna*, and, overhung by impenetrable foliage, form roomy bowers where dull obscurity reigns supreme. Such is the home of the chimpanzee.

subject to the orthodox Greek Church, where it is the only material allowed for church lights, is almost unbounded.

The ruins of the grass-huts beside the broad meadow-water brought back to our recollection the melancholy night of rain which we had to endure upon our outward journey. The spot was, if possible, more miserable and dejected now. Neither leaves nor grass could be obtained in sufficient quantity for our need. Trees had to be felled to make a path across the swamp, and even then, go carefully as we would, the mud was much above our knees. If the enemy had been sagacious enough to attack us under those adverse circumstances, we should have fallen an easy prey.

In another two days we should pass the enemy's border. The very expectation seemed to awaken our impatience, and we started off at early dawn. Already we could trace the footprints of our antagonists' outposts, who had been seen some distance along the road to watch for our approach. Towards noon we came to the official declaration of war, consisting, as I have previously described, of the maize, the feather, and the arrow, hung across our path, as the emblems of defiance. There was something of the anxiety of suspense as we found ourselves at the partition brook which marked off Wando's territory. Aware of the danger of venturing rashly into the pathless thickets, our cautious leader ordered a general halt. Small detachments were first despatched to reconnoitre and to clear the way. As soon as they had satisfied themselves that all was safe, the signal was given by the trumpets, and the column of bearers was set in motion. The crowd of women were not permitted to march as usual in single file, but for the sake of compactness were gathered in a mass and strode on, trampling down whatever vegetation came in their way; the chaos of confusion was indescribable; the shrill chatter of their voices mingled harshly with the clatter of their pots and pans; while above all rose the bellowing of the orders and the louder

volley of the oaths of the Nubians, who marched on with their guns in one hand, but making good use of their rods and kurbatches with the other.

Safely through the wood, we reached an open steppe. We were in sight of the enemy's position, and once again a halt was called. The occasional gleaming of a spear in the grass, or the waving of a plume upon a Niam-niam's hat, made us aware that we were not far from the presence of the foe. They seemed to be in a wide semicircle, that embraced the front of our halting-ground. There was, however, something in their demeanour that appeared to indicate a desire on their part for a parley. The interpreters therefore were sent forward, the trumpeter Inglerly at their head; Mohammed himself soon followed, and a conference ensued. The natives all this time took careful cognizance of the range of the Khartoomers' guns, and did not seem disposed to approach nearer than was requisite to understand what was said.

As the parley proceeded, and we saw the parties approximate nearer to each other, we began to expect a favourable termination of the interview. It turned out that the men with whom Mohammed was treating were representatives of the districts adjoining the A-Madi, the Nabanda Yuroo. They declared that though they were subject to Wando they had really no share in his hostile intentions; they were anxious to guard themselves against the mischief that might befall them from their proximity to the scene of war, and consequently were only pleading "for their hearths and homes." Mohammed was inclined to listen to their plea, although he was reckoning without his host. Meanwhile some of the actual belligerents arrived, and professed that they could give us a safe conduct across the country, declaring that they were well aware where Wando had deposited Mohammed's ivory, and upon these pretexts they urged Mohammed to accept them as guides.

I could not resist making my way up to Mohammed as he

stood surrounded by his guard, and giving his instructions to the interpreters, in order that I might point out to him the advantage of his position. I wanted him to understand how much better it would be to secure all these men as hostages than to trust to their promises and proposals; but he made light of my apprehensions, affirming that savages were all cowards and afraid of war, and that he had no doubt everything would come right at last.

Without further delay the A-Banga were then permitted to escort us to their villages on the other side of the brook, where, in spite of the suspicious absence of all the women and children, we received an abundant supply of provisions, and I was presented with a good store of the flesh of some eland-antelopes, which the natives had killed on the day before. In reality, these people amply deserved a thorough chastisement at our hands for the massacre of our women slaves during our outward journey, but Mohammed, under the hope of obtaining a safe transit and recovering his ivory, thought it more diplomatic to overlook the offence.

Before sunrise next morning all were in readiness to proceed. The day proved to myself to be one of the few unlucky days that marred the general good fortune that attended my enterprise. A slight mishap befell me in crossing the first brook, which was but the precursor of a more serious trouble to come. In crossing a swamp I fell into a deep quagmire, from which I scrambled out with everything upon me except my hat covered with the blackest and filthiest of mire. With all my might I shouted to my servants to bring me clean dry clothes. My outcry raised an alarm that spread to the rear. There arose an impression that I had been wounded, and in a short time half the caravan had crowded round. Order having been restored, we proceeded on our way, deviating, however, a little from our previous route, and passing numerous villages and cultivated spots. Owing to irregularities in the soil our caravan became somewhat broken,

and it was deemed advisable to make a halt near the huts of the next local overseer, for the double purpose of gathering the stragglers, and of allowing an interval for the morning meal.

Starting afresh, Mohammed led the way. He was himself unarmed, but he was attended by his young armour-bearers, and followed by a detachment of his black body-guard. Next in order and close behind were the men whose mediation and offers of guidance had yesterday been accepted. Somehow or other I could not get rid of my presentiment that these fellows were not to be trusted, and accordingly, contrary to my custom, I took good care to keep my trusty rifle in my hand. It struck me as very remarkable that in the villages which we passed the men, women, and children were all assembled in crowds, and calmly watched our progress, just as though there was no rumour or thought of war.

After about half a league I was at the head of a column of bearers, but I had fallen some hundred paces behind Mohammed. All at once several shots fired in rapid succession made me aware that something unusual had happened in front. Looking to the right I saw some natives rushing away at full speed across the steppes; a hasty fire was opened upon the fugitives, and their savage yells of pain betrayed that some of them were wounded, although they contrived to make good their escape. Another moment and I caught sight of Mohammed being carried back towards us with a broad streak of blood across his white sash, and close beside were the two little armour-bearers writhing with their faces to the ground, their backs pierced by the native lances. It was a ghastly sight. Dashing up to Mohammed I ripped up his clothes, and discovered at a glance that my poor friend had received a deep spear-cut in his thigh. I did not lose an instant in adopting what measures I could. As fate would have it, I had a box of insect needles in my pocket. Water, of which we were always careful to have a supply,

was close at hand. Mohammed's own muslin scarf was just the thing for a bandage. Having carefully been washed, and then bound together with half-a-dozen of the strongest of the pins, and finally enveloped in the scarf and tied with yarn, the gaping wound was completely dressed, and began to heal almost as soon as it was closed.

The sad event had occurred in this way. One of the pretended guides forced his way between Mohammed and his young shield-bearers, and brandishing his lance cried out, "The people of Yuroo are for peace; *we* are for war." Mohammed instinctively made a sidelong movement to escape the falling blow, and thus probably saved his life. Meanwhile the other natives attacked the boys and stabbed them between the shoulders. Although Mohammed had escaped the direct blow that was designed, the huge lance, with its head a foot and a half in length, had sunk deep into his flesh. With the fortitude of desperation he dragged the murderous weapon from the wound, hurled it after the fugitive assassin, and then fell senseless to the earth. The injury caused by the barbs of the spear (which were an inch long) was miserably aggravated by the impetuous fury with which the weapon was extracted. The wound was broad and deep enough to admit my whole hand, and had only just escaped the kidney, which was visible through the open flesh.

In their first surprise at the sudden attack, Mohammed's personal retinue had fired almost at random after the fugitive traitors; but as their guns were only loaded with deer-shot, they for the most part hit the enemy without killing them. Immediately upon this there ensued a general chase, and during the time that I was engaged in binding up Mohammed's wound, I could hear the reports of firearms along the whole line of our procession.

And now again a halt was ordered, the columns of bearers were collected, their loads were deposited in piles upon the

ground, and the signal was given for a general plunder. Joyfully enough was the order hailed; it was especially welcome to the hungry Bongo after their scanty fare on the previous days.

As a proof that the natives were in league together, I noticed that directly after the treacherous attack upon Mohammed, all spectators disappeared from the road; and although the Nubians, considering themselves perfectly justified in taking what slaves they could, went in pursuit of women and children, I did not see that their exertions were attended with any success. They secured a number of unfortunate boys, but they let them loose again, persecuting them with gun-shot and lances as they took to flight. The air rung with their shrieks, and it was only the long grass, I cannot doubt, that prevented my seeing not a few of these undeserving victims sink and die upon the earth.

Within an hour not only were the granaries of the villages around so effectually ransacked that abundance of corn was piled up around our quarters, but the villages themselves were involved in flames. With an expedition quite astonishing, the conical roofs were removed from the nearest huts and employed in the construction of an improvised camp for ourselves, which was subsequently surrounded by a substantial abattis. The woodwork from the adjacent dwellings furnished the material for this defence, which we presumed might be necessary in case of attack.

Meantime our fighting force was adequate to keep the natives, who had assembled to do battle with us as intruders, at a safe distance from our camp, where our own negroes were busily storing whatever they had captured. While this was going on some of the fighting men came in, and approaching their chieftain, who, wrapped in wet bandages, was reclining on a couch beneath a tree, laid at his feet their first trophies of war, consisting of several heads of the A-Banga. It was in the first excitement of battle that

these heads had been taken off the bodies of the fallen, and in revenge for the slaughterous attack upon Mohammed; but throughout the whole period of hostility, although some twenty natives were killed, this was the first and last instance that came under my notice of the barbarous custom. All the negroes attached to our caravan had a superstitious horror of the practice of decapitating the dead, and the Nubians would have deemed themselves defiled by touching the corpse of a heathen. As no value appeared in any quarter to be attached to the heads I appropriated them to myself, and was thus able to add to the variety of my collection of skulls.

The scene of these adventures was within gunshot of a bank thicket, through the deep hollow of which flowed a copious brook that a little farther north joined the Assika. On the opposite bank, which was considerably higher than the side on which we were encamped, there were several groups of hamlets scattered about the open plain, and between these numbers of armed men could be distinguished hurrying about, the precise object of whose activity we were at a loss to determine. Amongst the Nubians who were with us were some of the stoutest and most resolute men in the whole of Abou Sammat's corps, and these had come to the resolution that they would force their way through the natives who might be hidden in the jungle, cross the brook, and carry an attack over to the opposite bank. All the ivory that had been purchased on the outward route and deposited in the land seemed to be in peril of being lost, and it was the conviction of the Nubians that their only chance now of recovering their property was by capturing some of the native women, who would have to be redeemed. Things seemed to promise favourably for the undertaking. The soil was suitable, the network of brooks and trenches interspersed with grass plots opened certain facilities for encompassing an adversary, and if the Nubians had acted

with greater determination they could hardly have failed in securing the desired hostages, but the passage across the woods on the river-banks was their first difficulty. They had to contend at a great disadvantage, for they could only squander their bullets uselessly or at random among the trees; while the natives from their lurking-places could do good and sure execution with their spears and arrows.

I accompanied our party of assailants for some distance, and had a better opportunity than had ever presented itself before of observing the effect of the native arrows. The arrows that had wooden heads I observed to have a range of at least 300 paces, and to fall with scarcely a sound; such as had iron tips on the contrary came whizzing through the air, but would not carry half the distance; these appeared only to be used when the natives felt tolerably sure of their aim.

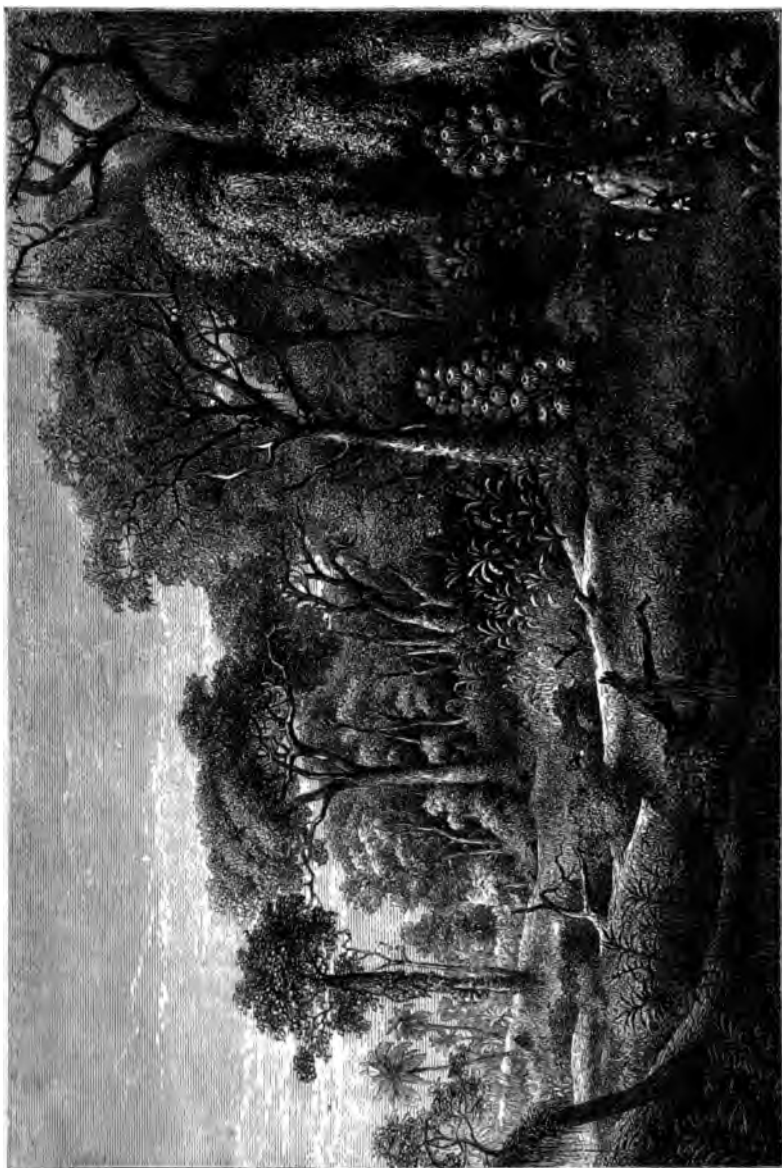
The A-Banga have a war-dress and equipments that would seem to be entirely derived from the Monbuttoo: they dance and jump about behind the bushes as if they were taking part in a pantomime, generally trying to keep a crouching posture, and only rising to discharge their arrows. The storm of arrows which they hurled against us as we advanced fell like strays from a waggon-load of straw, and yet our enemy could not be detected anywhere, excepting at intervals a form would be seen to rush across as it changed its place of ambush. Just at the beginning of the fray one of our side was struck by a wooden arrow in rather a remarkable way; the point, which was some inches long and as hard as iron, having caught the inner corner of his eye, remained sticking close to the side of the lachrymal cavity; the fellow roared out lustily, but he was found to have sustained no serious hurt. It was said that a casualty of this kind was by no means unusual, because the natives always aimed at the eye as the most vulnerable quarter; but as the arrows are very light, and have to describe a curve before they can reach

their mark, I should presume their destination is altogether a matter of chance.

On the border of the wood, close to the pathway as it emerged, some of the more courageous of the natives made a stand and received our people with gestures of defiance, brandishing their weapons, and tossing their plumed heads. From the thickets beyond, the war-cries of those who were less venturesome could be distinctly heard, and from the distance, beyond again, resounded the clang of the kettledrums. One of the savages sprang forward towards us, and holding up his shield denounced us with a volley of maddened imprecations. A bullet quickly pierced alike his shield and his breast, and he sank mute and senseless to the earth. A second ventured forward, but only to succumb to the same fate. Then the savages thought it was time to retreat, and accordingly wheeling round they disappeared into the obscurity of the wood, where the rustle of the foliage gave witness to a general flight. Now was the opportunity to cross, of which the Nubians took advantage, but though they reached the farmsteads without opposition they could only fire into the air without an aim, as though they were greeting the new moon after the fast of Ramadan.

For myself curiosity alone had led me on. I had no war-like ardour, I had no feeling of vengeance against the natives, and consequently I took no personal share in this mild skirmish, but those who were present delighted afterwards in telling wonderful stories of the daring prowess I had displayed in penetrating the enemy's ranks. Such reports often follow a traveller's reputation for years, and whoever repeats them is pretty sure to append some marvel of his own fancy. "*When fame paints a serpent, she attaches feet to its body.*"

The savages had no idea of the velocity of a bullet; they invariably ducked their heads as often as they could hear a ball whistling in the air; and it was a very ludicrous spec-



MOHAMMED DEFIES HIS ENEMIES.

[illegible]

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

¹⁰ For example, see the discussion of the "new" *Journal of American Studies* in the introduction to the special issue by David Nye and Richard Horwitz, "The Journal of American Studies: A New Beginning," *Journal of American Studies*, 36 (2002), 1-10.



tacle when hundreds of black heads that had been peeping from behind the trees would simultaneously disappear.

By sundown the whole region about us was clear of the enemy, and as darkness came on the bearers returned within the shelter of our abattis, laden richly with spoils that they had secured in the adjacent villages. Sentries and watch-fires were established, and the night was passed in a stillness that was rarely broken by a stray and distant shot. With the exception of a few Bongo-bearers who, yielding to their marauding propensities, had pushed too far into the hamlets, we had suffered no loss. Two of the Nubians, however, had received severe lance-wounds, and had to be carried back to the camp on litters.

It was currently reported among the natives that Mohammed was mortally wounded. Encouraged by the accession of fresh contingents during the night, they once again made the woods re-echo with their savage war-cries, amidst which could be heard the vilest and most abusive Arabic invectives that they seemed to have learnt for the mere purpose of vituperating their enemies. Mbahly's death, however, was the burden of their chorus "Mbahly! Mbahly! Give us Mbahly. We want meat." Mohammed would not submit to these taunts. In spite of his weakness he insisted upon showing himself. With his wound firmly bandaged, he was conveyed beyond the camp to a white ant-hill, from whence he could be seen far around. For nearly a quarter of an hour he stood upon this elevation swinging his scimitar, and shouting with the full strength of his voice, "Here I am, Mbahly is not dead yet." He then challenged them to come with a hundred lances if they dare, and retorted upon them in jeering scorn their cry of, "Pushyo! pushyo!" (meat, meat), always using the Niam-niam dialect, in which he was tolerably fluent.*

* In the woodcut that depicts this scene, the background gives a representation of the splendid forest scenery that marked this spot.

Mohammed was at once to be recognised by his Monbuttoo straw hat, with its bright-red feathers. Although all his compatriots would have considered it a degradation to adopt a savage costume, he always delighted, in these expeditions, to dress himself like a native chieftain. In order to give the natives a still further demonstration of his safety, in the course of the afternoon he made his nephew array himself in his own state attire, his flowing rokko-coat, and his stately plumes, and sent him to conduct a sally towards the north. This party, however, returned without coming to any engagement.

I spent the whole day in my own tent preparing the ammunition which I supposed would be requisite for my people if the state of warfare should last. Deer-shot, with some of a heavier description, I considered would be of the greatest service in the hands of unskilful marksmen. I had another occupation, which made me feel like a very Nemesis. I manipulated the heads of the A-Banga men which I had so recently appropriated. Probably with their own eyes these heads had watched the stewing of other human heads, but now they had to simmer on in my caldron. Although I was quite aware that the Nubians reckoned the bones of all heathens and unbelievers as entitled to no more respect than the bones of brute beasts, yet for decency's sake I preferred performing the operation in the seclusion of my tent. Notwithstanding that my dogs had not had any animal food for several days, they could not be induced to eat a morsel of the boiled human flesh.

Just as it was growing dark we were startled, if not alarmed, by the appearance of a great troop of natives. The attack was not made, as hitherto, from the dense dark woods at our feet, but proceeded from our old path upon the south. Only the foremost ranks were visible, the rear being hidden by the high grass and bushes; but the wild cries, like the howling of a coming storm, testified to the overwhelming

numbers of the aggressors. Half of our armed force issued from the camp in a compact line, and fired a volley straight upon the nearest of the assailants, five of whom were seen to fall dead upon the ground. The altered tone of the war-cry proved that many more were wounded, and as all the guns were loaded with a good handful of heavy shot this was sure to be the case; but this time the conflict came to such close quarters that two more of our men were severely wounded by the native lances. As soon as the attack was thus diverted, and the front ranks of the enemy began to retreat, the negroes of our caravan, who had been placed in reserve immediately behind the soldiers, started off at full speed in pursuit of the fugitives, and their lances made far greater havoc than all the bullets of the Nubians. Before leaving Munza's residence our bearers had all been provided with new weapons, and thus our little negro band was able to hold its own against greatly preponderating numbers of the enemy, who, I should imagine, were at least 10,000 strong.

The weight and diversity of the weapons of the A-Banga, added to the inconvenience of their costume, necessarily prevented them from making a rapid flight; they were consequently obliged to keep throwing off one impediment after another until the ground was strewn with shields, lances, clothes, and sometimes with their false chignons, ornaments and all. When the negroes returned to camp, bringing in their spoil and swinging the chignons on the points of their lances, they were greeted alike with the glad shout of triumph and the loud ring of laughter.

It was near midnight when the pursuers came back. They had prosecuted their chase to the frontier wilderness; they had found the villages all deserted by their inhabitants, and had obtained such stores of plunder that enough was accumulated to keep our whole caravan for a month.

This had been the most energetic attack that the enemy had yet attempted; it was made exclusively by the A-Banga,

no Niam-niam having as yet appeared upon the scene. The arrival of Wando, with all his force, was expected the next day.

Early, therefore, on the following morning half of our little armament was sent forward to the north, not merely to anticipate any movement on Wando's part, but, if possible, to accomplish the object of obtaining some women as hostages, who might be exchanged for the still undiscovered ivory. Mohammed was annoyed at the previous failures to secure any women, knowing by experience that hardly any ransom is accounted too large by the Niam-niam for the recovery of their wives.

About two hours after the departure of our soldiers a singular sight arrested our attention. Marching along in single file upon the top of the opposite slope, which was separated from our camp by the woody depression and the brook, we saw a lengthened train of armed natives, who by their large quadrangular shields gleaming in the sun could be at once recognised as A-Banga. The procession seemed unending; it occupied fully three hours in passing, and at the lowest computation must have consisted of 10,000 or 12,000 men. It was at first the general impression that the chieftain had arrived with the main body of his troops. It was conjectured that he intended to make a circuit to the west, and, having crossed the brook, to attack us at nightfall from the same quarter as our assailants of the previous day. But our fears were not realised, and we remained utterly unable to reconcile the manœuvres we had witnessed with the absence of Wando, which was still a mystery to us, as he might have been joined by all his allies in the course of a single day. Everything, however, was made clear to us when our soldiers returned at night from their plundering expeditions. They told us that on arriving in the morning at the hamlets they had found the fighting force of the A-Banga all drawn up, evidently waiting in anxious suspense

for the assistance of Wando, but that on their approach this large body of men immediately vacated their post. Thus the long train that had caused us so much bewilderment was simply the 10,000 natives retreating at the advance of a detachment of forty or fifty of our soldiers.

Upon the gradual slope on which our camp-enclosure was situated, the white ant-hills, that often rise to an altitude of ten feet, were the only eminences whence any extended view could be obtained across the long grass of the steppe. These were nearly always occupied by the natives, who mounted them for the purpose of getting a better vantage-ground for shouting their menaces and invective insults, but occasionally they answered another end: they served to allow the outposts of the contending parties to hold communication with each other. Amongst Mohammed's trained soldiers he had no less than forty Niam-niam, who were very devoted to him. These would appear to have held some correspondence with the enemy, and from them we learnt that the A-Banga were greatly irritated at the conduct of Wando, who, after urging them to attack us, had left them in the lurch. They complained that all they had got from their acquiescence in his wish was that the "Turks" had killed their fellow-comrades and laid waste their land. Wando himself, they said, had had an unpropitious augury at the beginning of the fray, and, intimidated at the prospect, had abandoned his scheme; he had withdrawn to the recesses of the forest, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the A-Banga, he now refused to render them any aid.

The little wooden bench, the "boroo," which I have already described, was also consulted in our own camp. My two Niam-niam, who were no great heroes, although they had an almost unlimited confidence in Wando's power, had a still more unbounded reliance upon the answers of their wooden oracle. The test had been very unfavourable for one of them, but I was told that it had promised a safe escape for

myself, a circumstance that once again confirmed my people in their opinion of my unchangeable good luck. The A-Banga did indeed make an exception in my favour when they shouted their defiance from the ant-hills; the Turks, they vowed, should perish, but the white man might go scot-free, because it was the first time of his coming to their land. The quietness and retirement of my daily occupation, my interested delight in studying the peculiarities of those I saw, and perhaps, too, my reputation of being a harmless "leaf-eater," all seem to have conspired to gain me a general good-will.

Little Tikkitikki was perfectly unmoved by all the proceedings; he showed no sign of fear; he skipped about and played with the war-trophies; but chiefly he stuffed himself with sesame-pap, of which there was a lavish abundance at his disposal.

On the fourth morning the enemy had entirely vanished; the inhabitants, too, had all utterly gone. Throughout the period of warfare, the Nubians, neither in courage nor in endurance, had come out particularly strong. The main burden of the contest had fallen upon the "Farookh." As a matter of fact, however, the Nubian regulars and the black Farookh are equally indispensable to every commander of an expedition. The native soldiers may be the better shots, and they have the advantage of knowing the country more thoroughly and of being accustomed to the climate; moreover, on rainy days (when the Nubians would sit shivering in their huts) they will wrap their guns in their girdles and with the greatest alacrity go perfectly naked over wood and steppe to repel an advancing foe; but, at the same time, there is always the risk of their decamping at a moment's provocation,—a dilemma into which a commander would not be led by the Nubians, who would be afraid of deserting at such a distance from Khartoom. The Nubians, however, are much more often ailing; they are never per-

fectly tractable, having an unconquerable aversion to all restraint; they never showed themselves as remarkably valiant in our conflicts with the savages, and were in continual apprehension of being devoured. It was not so much death in itself of which they were afraid, as of being deprived of the rites of burial, which are prescribed in the Koran as indispensable for obtaining the palm of Paradise. The lack of a grave is abhorrent to the notions of every Mussulman, but the idea of being destined for the unclean stomach of a cannibal was intolerable.

Mohammed, encouraged by the favourable progress of his wound, now expressed his desire to quit our present quarters. I endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, and represented to him that, although the wound had closed without any suppuration, any exertion would have a tendency to open it afresh; but he persisted in his purpose, and determined upon being carried in a litter across the hostile territory. In consequence of the journey the complete healing was thrown back for a fortnight; but altogether I congratulated myself that my amateur surgery, which had hitherto been practised mainly on horses and mules, had proved so satisfactory.

By sunrise on the fifth morning after arriving at this inhospitable spot, our caravan was again in motion. The camp was burnt, and great heaps of corn, sesame, kindy, earthnuts, and other provisions, were scattered about, and as a matter of necessity left behind upon the ground, much to the chagrin of the bearers, who had once again to face the deprivations of the wilderness.

It was not without some confusion that we crossed the Assika. The way before us seemed clear of enemies, and our crowd moved fearlessly on amongst the thickets. The white ant-hills on the outskirts of the forest continued to afford admirable stations for reconnoitring, and for enabling the advanced party to announce that all was safe.

Quitting again our previous line of march, we continued our journey towards the north, and crossed three more brooks, each of them conducting us to a fresh grass plain. Once, just as we approached the edge of a gallery, we were assailed by a shower of arrows, but the volley of bullets that we sent in reply very quickly deterred the invisible foe from any further attack. No doubt the enemy were close enough upon us to make certain of their mark, as the number of iron-headed arrows was usually large; yet they did not succeed in inflicting a single serious wound. It happened fortunately that the bearers, who were more especially exposed to the arrows, were thrown into no disorder; they had had the careful protection of the Farookh, who had made a fresh path for themselves through the wood, on either side of the beaten track.

After passing the last of the three brooks which I have just mentioned, we came to a cultivated district, and as it was near midday we made a short halt beside the hamlets. The Bongo had now free scope for their destructive propensities; they proceeded to cut down the standing maize to their hearts' content; they not only plundered all within their reach, but laid waste the land in every direction. All the world over, war is ever war.

In ransacking the huts the plundering parties had had the luck to discover some of the missing ivory. A number of valuable tusks were recognized as being those which had been purchased from Wando, by means of some incisions that Mohammed had made upon them; the magazines in which they were concealed being revealed by the cackling of a lot of hens down amongst some unthrashed eleusine. When the hens were found a quantity of eggs was found with them, and I was in consequence treated to a very choice breakfast. Eggs are very rare throughout the district, the Niam-niam hens being as niggardly with them as the Dinka cows are with their milk.

•

At noon the sun became overcast, and the whole sky veiled in a grey vapour that reminded one of a late autumn day in the north. A phenomenon then ensued which is by no means uncommon in these regions; the disk of the sun turned quite red, and was seen to be encircled by two distinct concentric halos, which in rings of shadowy brown embraced at least a third of the firmament above.

Turning to the E.S.E. we kept now to the right of the depression of the brook, passing numerous groups of huts upon our way. Isolated dome-palms (*Hyphæne thebaica*), rare in the Niam-niam lands, reared themselves at intervals like landmarks on the route. Farther on we crossed the Diamvonoo, which flowed through a ravine precipitous and obscure, and subsequently, leaving the old road to the west, we had to ford a succession of gallery-brooks. We had already made our way through four of these, when on approaching to the fifth we caught sight of a number of natives who, surprised at our appearance, slunk away from their huts, and tried, like beasts of prey, to find a safe lurking-place in the adjacent thickets. The capture was effected here of two Niam-niam women. They were bringing water from the brook, and being espied by the advanced guard were soon secured and conducted to the caravan, where, after the failure of the previous days, their arrival was hailed with a shout of glee. The women themselves were perfectly composed, and apparently quite indifferent, making themselves at once thoroughly at home with such of their countrywomen as they found already in our train.

It was later than usual before we halted for the night, and our men were more than ordinarily fatigued. In consequence of this our camp was pitched with haste and carelessness. The weather turned out cold and very rainy; the ground became so soft and soddened that it would afford no hold for the tent-pegs; and so all prospect of rest had to be abandoned. Every moment the pole that upheld the frail shelter above

me threatened to give way. I held tightly on, and shouted through the commotion of the storm for my servants to make haste, and they only came in time to save me from a thorough drenching. This scene had to be repeated more than once.

It was touching, through the moaning of the wind, to catch the lamentations of the Niam-niam men bewailing the loss of their captured wives; cannibals though they were, they were evidently capable of true conjugal affection. The Nubians remained quite unaffected by any of their cries, and never for a moment swerved from their purpose of recovering the ivory before they surrendered the women.

Anxious next day to continue our course to the east we had to cross so many streams that they seemed to make a labyrinth of waters. The windings of the interlacing brooks and the network of entangled streams apparently corresponded almost precisely with what Livingstone describes as the hydrographical character of the country on the west of Lake Tanganyika, and which he has compared to frosted window panes in winter. This great explorer (who has been over at least a third of the vast continent of Africa) noticed a similar source-territory through which flowed the Lualaba,* at that time quite an enigmatical stream. Its course, indeed, was towards the north, but Livingstone was manifestly in error when he took it for a true source of the Nile; a supposition that might have some semblance of foundation, originating in the inexplicable volume of the water of Lake Mwootan (Albert Nyanza), but which was negatived completely as soon as more ample investigation had been made as to the comparative level, direction, and connection of other rivers, especially of the Welle.

We now found ourselves in a locality with which our own Niam-niam were by no means acquainted, and there was no

* In one of his letters, Livingstone describes the Lualaba as "a lacustrine river."

facility for getting any proper guides; just, therefore, as might be expected, we missed our way, and proceeded (without knowing whither we should come) for a couple of leagues along a splendid gallery, where numbers of silver-white colobus-apes were merrily taking their pleasure.

I had my suspicions that we were going wrong, and by referring to my journal in which I had entered the details of our former route, I ascertained that we were now taking the same direction as we had followed then. Further inquiry soon convinced us that we were proceeding straight towards the spot where we had last met Wando, and that in fact we were not distant more than three miles from his residence. We were quite aware that he was not just then at his Mbanga, but still there was no doubt that if we would ensure reaching Mohammed's Seriba unmolested, it would be politic to make a wider circuit round the hostile district, and accordingly, without delay, we retraced our steps for a considerable distance.

On the confines of the gallery, the land had just been cleared for a crop of sweet-potatoes, and a number of women was occupied in the work. They had a lot of dogs scampering about, and the sight of these caused quite an excitement amongst our Mittoo-bearers, who darted at them with their spears, and slaughtered them in the most remorseless fashion. Pitiable and heartrending in the extreme it was to see the poor brutes writhing upon the lances. I must confess to have felt more sympathy for the dogs in this country than for all the men. Perchance some one is inclined to reprobate such a sentiment; but I think I could show him a picture where his own best sympathies would hardly be with his fellow-creatures. I could paint for him the spectacle, as it has been seen on a Sunday morning in some thriving town, when all the residents are sallying out in their best attire, and in mournful contrast a string of poor ill-clad, dejected emigrants passes by. What is it then, I would ask, that gives the

deepest, truest pathos to the scene? It is not the sight of the human wretchedness, which probably is the penalty of indolence or crime, but rather it is more than all the sight of the faithful dog that has followed its master through weal and woe, never quitting his side, and taking its share in all the vicissitudes of his lot.

We had now turned due east along a road that led us across the Dyagbe, the brook that ran past Wando's residence; and, after marching for three hours over a desert steppe, we finally encamped upon the left bank of a large gallery-wood, where the vegetation was so luxuriant, that, forgetting all my fatigue, I botanised until night stopped my further researches. Game was abundant, and we had a savoury supper of roast antelope.

The next morning was wet and gloomy. In forcing our way through the dripping thickets, in order to reach the river, we got thoroughly drenched to the skin. We had also to endure incessant torture from the barbs of the calamus (the generic name of the rotang), which like so many little pike-hooks insinuated themselves through our clothes to our flesh: attached to the twigs and universally diffused among the bushes, they were a perpetual irritation for the traveller. After we had accomplished this irritating passage, we proceeded northwards, crossed two more brooks of a similar character, and arrived at a cultivated and populous district on the banks of the Mbrwole.

The Farookh, who had been sent on for a league in advance, had effectually scoured the district, and had been rewarded by the capture of a young lady of rank: she had been taken by surprise, and in the wonted manner of the country endeavoured to save herself by taking refuge in the forest, but she was tracked like a deer, and captured after a short chase. She was attired in a magnificent apron of skins, and was elaborately as well as fantastically adorned with strings of teeth; and to judge from the numerous trophies

of the chase with which she was decorated, she might be suspected of having a mighty Nimrod amongst her circle of admirers. Full-grown men are never seized on these occasions, and that for two reasons; in the first place because considering capture as identical with death, they defend themselves with the fury of desperation; and secondly, because they are of no value as slaves. In these expeditions, it is an understood thing that the sheyba, or yoke, is never employed to fetter strong men; it would be far too much trouble to look after them and to drive them along when all one's energies are required for the protection of the baggage.

The Mbrwole, which, ten miles lower down, after receiving a number of rivulets from the south, becomes a considerable stream, had here the appearance of being nothing more than an ordinary gallery-brook; and if I had not heard the name from the Niam-niam, who are always accurate in the nomenclature of their waters, I should have never imagined that it was the main stream. The Bahr-el-Wando, as it is called by the Khartoomers, flowed due west; and though doubtless it was fed by various minor brooks, it was here little more than a ditch of a few feet in breadth; yet the entire depression, clothed with its woody heights, was scarcely less than 1500 paces broad.

The abject terror which the Niam-niam men displayed, lest they should be devoured, formed a very remarkable contrast to the quiet composure of the young woman who had just been captured, and who, without any sign of fear, entered into conversation and was ready to furnish us with whatever geographical information she could. Her calm demeanour led me to the conclusion that the Niam-niam forego eating their female prisoners of war, for the advantage of reserving them as slaves.

Under the guidance of our captive, we crossed the Mbrwole, and taking possession of the huts on the opposite bank, we

found ourselves towards midday well installed in a comfortable camp.

The proximity of our position here to the thickets made a nocturnal attack more than probable. I resolved, therefore, to pitch my own tent in the middle of the huts and to keep a lamp burning throughout the night. The tent consequently became (as it was in a measure transparent) a great lantern in the darkness and formed a target for the aim of the missiles from the woods, a number of arrows being found on the following morning sticking in the top; these I have preserved as memorials of our bivouac on the Mbrwole. All night long the natives were skirmishing with our outposts, thus necessitating a continual fire in reply; but although I slept alone in my tent, the experience of the last few days had so accustomed me to the perpetual shots that my night's rest was perfectly undisturbed. I was well aware that before the enemy could get to my position in the centre of the camp, they must alarm the groups of bearers who were crouching round their fires, and must afterwards penetrate the quarters of the soldiers and of my own servants.

To get into the right road we had again to cross the Mbrwole. Another two leagues to the west along the left bank, and the river was recrossed once more. Over cultivated tracts of rising ground we proceeded to the north and came to some extensive flats of gneiss, the first we observed in the course of our return. This gneiss, being on the hither side of the river, and to the east of the furrowed soil which we noticed on our outward way between the Mbrwole and the Lindukoo, acquired an increased significance as apparently belonging to the line of elevation that traverses the watershed of the Nile.

Leaving this interesting locality, we made a palpable descent, and had next to pass over the meadow-waters that, flowing in a northerly direction, formed affluents of the Lindukoo. No regular path conducted to the farther side;

pell-mell the caravan plunged into the long grass and clumps of *Phrynica* that made a half-floating surface to the swampy depths. Experience makes a traveller wary in getting across these marshy spots; he learns by practice how to avoid a ducking; he gets the knack of kicking down a clump of weeds without lifting his feet, and can tell to a nicety whether it will bear his weight; by caution such as this he surmounts the difficulty of "the lacustrine streams." After passing the last of these, we made our next encampment near some Niam-niam hamlets, which, in this direction, were the last before we should arrive at Aboo Sammat's territory. Our arrival here was unexpected, yet before the bulk of the caravan had come up the inhabitants had all made off, so that we found the place entirely deserted. Although the late outbreak of hostilities had put the whole district upon the alert, there were various things to prevent the foe from reckoning with any certainty upon our movements; unevenness of soil, extent of wilderness, prospect of supplies, all influenced our plans, which might be changed at any hour; and thus it happened that in spite of all the spies that might be set to watch us, the adversary was never safe from being taken by surprise.

Ten leagues still remained between our present quarters and Aboo Sammat's hospitable *Seriba*, which it was our wish to reach by the shortest route.

An early hour of the following day found us at the Lindukoo, that branch of the Yubbo, which I have already described as the last tributary of the Nile system, and which is distinguishable from the other rivers of the district by the eastward flow of its waters. It was here considerably enlarged by receiving the meadow waters from the watershed. Bounded by banks some 20 feet in height; it meandered along a deep bed that was 30 feet in breadth, through low-lying steppes, which at no great distance were replaced by woods.

The bank-forests that give the flora of the southern Niam-niam lands its singular resemblance to the West African type of vegetation here came to an end. In arriving at the gneiss-hills, we had entered upon the limits of the dense bush-forest which covers Mohammed's entire territory, an area of nearly 500 square miles. Whilst, in the region of the gallery-forests, all the trees and bushes are confined to the river-banks, the intermediate spaces being occupied by uniform grass-plains, *here*, on the contrary, in the region of continuous woods all watercourses of every kind, whether they are rivers or mere brooks are (just as in Bongoland) bounded by low open plains, which extend, without being wooded at all, to the very shores. The hydrographical system is better developed, and imparts a well-defined aspect to the scenery, the strips of open grassy steppe along the margins of the watercourses winding like streams of verdure through the dense masses of the foliage.

I swam across the narrow though copious river, while the bearers conveyed the baggage over along the trunks of trees that were thrown from side to side. Turning to the north-east we passed over two more meadow-waters and reached the Yubbo, which was now 50 feet wide, and too deep to wade; as no trees could be found of a length sufficient to serve as bridges, some grass rafts had to be extemporised.

We were now once more in our former route. Another half league brought us to the Uzze, of which, at this season, the stream was so extremely sluggish that by my usual test of a gourd-flask tied to a string I could detect no apparent current at all. The river we found was 5 feet deep and 25 feet wide.

The herds of buffaloes which we had noticed two months before seemed never to have changed their quarters. A chase was started while the sun still gave us light, and before night closed in the carcasses of two powerful brutes were seething in caldrons that had long been empty.

Early on the 1st of May we were joined by some Niam-niam who were under Mohammed's jurisdiction, and who, having been stationed as outposts on the borders of the hostile territory, had been attracted into the frontier forest by the shots of the previous evening.

The last stage of our march before reaching the Seriba was soon accomplished. The road led through a charming park-like wood, through which, by subterranean channels, the meadow-waters of the Yabo and Yabongo rolled off their verdure-hidden streams. In this latitude ($4^{\circ} 5' N.$), the rain had had very little effect upon the lesser rivulets of the district, and the only signs of the advancing season were to be found in the increased variety of newly-sprouting plants and flowers.

We had a general rendezvous two leagues west of the Seriba, on the spot where we had made our first bivouac when we were starting to the south. It was here that Mohammed was desirous of erecting a new Seriba, as the buildings of the old one were becoming somewhat ruined, and this appeared a better site for defending himself against aggressors. Besides Wando on the south, he had another enemy on the west, viz. Wando's brother Mbeeoh, who, as an independent chieftain, ruled the district on the lower Yubbo, before its union with the Sway; and the combined attacks of these two placed his possessions at times in considerable jeopardy. To escape this difficulty Mohammed now resolved to undertake a campaign against Mbeeoh first, and, as soon as this was accomplished, to proceed with his measures of reprisal against Wando.

Until the enterprise against Mbeeoh was over, I was left to take up my abode with the invalided soldiers, and my own little retinue upon the banks of the Nabambisso.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOLITARY days and short provisions. Productive ant-hill. Ideal plenty and actual necessity. Attempt at epicurism. Expedition to the east. Papyrus swamp. Disgusting food of the Niam-niam. Merdyan's Seriba. Hyæna as beast of prey. Losing the way. Reception in Tuhamy's Seriba. Scenery of Mondoo. Gyabir's marriage. Discovery of the source of the Dyoor. Mount Baginze. Vegetation of mountain. Cyanite gneiss. Mohammed's campaign against Mbeeh. Three Bongo missing. Skulls Nos. 36, 37, and 38. Indifference of Nubians to cannibalism. Horrible scene. Change in mode of living. Invasion of ants. Peculiar method of crossing the Sway. Bad tidings. Successful chase. Extract of meat. Return of long absent friends. Adventures of Mohammed's detachment. Route from Rikkete to Kanna. Disappointment with Niam-niam dog. Limited authority of Nganye. Suspension-bridge over the Tondy.

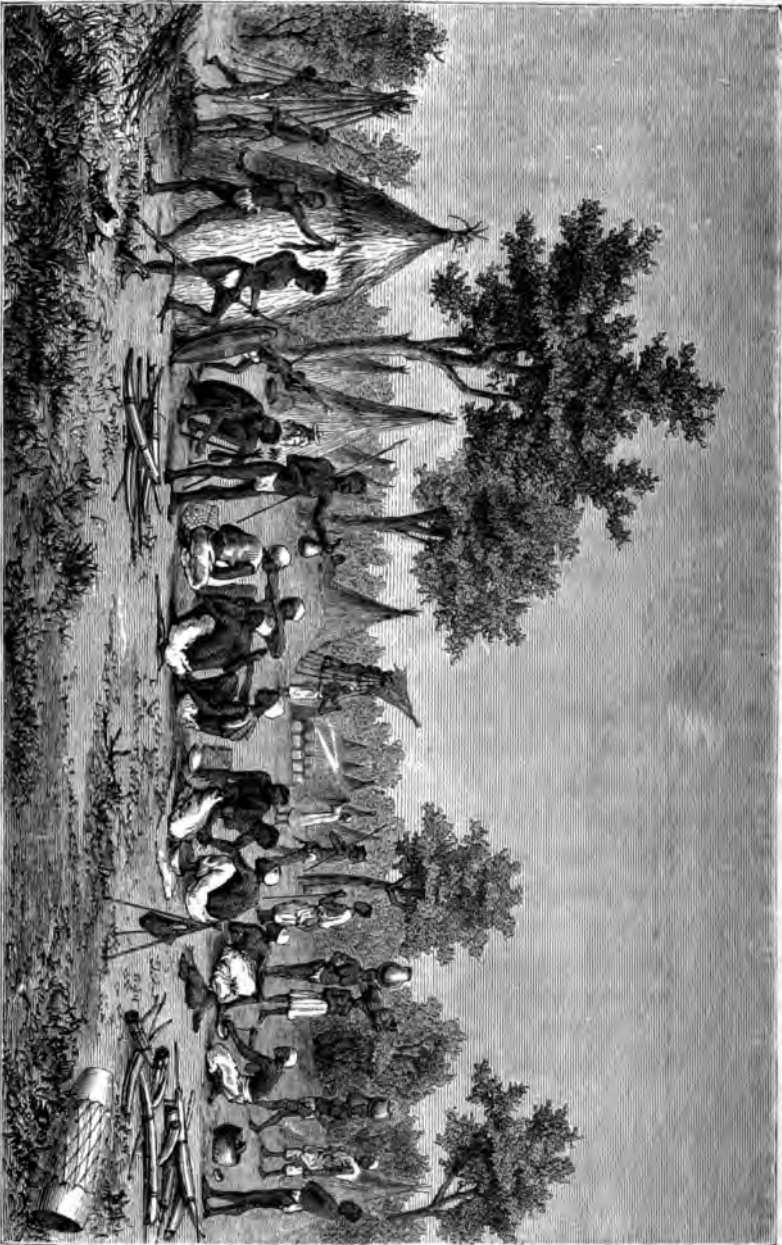
AFTER the fatigue and excitement of our previous journey we were glad to recruit ourselves by a comfortable camp life in the dense bush-forest on the Nabambisso. Spacious grass-huts had been erected for our accommodation until the new Seriba should be completed, and these, nestling amongst the massive foliage of the abundant vegetation, gave the spot an aspect that was almost home-like. A refreshing rain had moderated the temperature; and the air, mild and laden, with the fragrant odours of the wood, gave animation both to mind and body.

Three years previously all the land had been under cultivation; but nature had soon effaced well-nigh every trace of human labour, and the roots of the trees and shrubs that had only been partially destroyed by the tillage had sprouted forth with redoubled vigour and still more gigantic development of leaf; thus attesting the unfailing power of vitality

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is noted that the English language has a long and rich history, and that the study of its history is essential for a full understanding of the language.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is noted that the English language has a long and rich history, and that the study of its history is essential for a full understanding of the language.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is noted that the English language has a long and rich history, and that the study of its history is essential for a full understanding of the language.



DAILY LIFE IN CAMP.



in the wilderness and the impotency of man against the persistency of nature.

In this charming locality I passed the early days of May, a month which in these latitudes may truly be called a month of rapture, when the commencement of the rains has renewed the life and growth of all around. From morning to night I strolled leisurely about amongst the bushes, but without neglecting a chance of enriching my stores of botanical treasure by every novelty that presented itself.

Meanwhile, Mohammed was occupied in the formation of his new Seriba. Hundreds of natives were employed in conveying the trunks of trees from the neighbouring forest, and these were erected side by side and close together in a deep trench; the trench was afterwards filled in with earth, and the palisaded Seriba, a hundred feet square, was all complete. So quickly was the work accomplished that on the fifth day after our arrival the invalided soldiers, by whom it was to be occupied, were removed into their new quarters. The other soldiers in the interval had vacated the old Seriba. Everything being ready, Mohammed, accompanied by his entire marching force, started off on his campaign against Mbeeoh and Wando; during his absence it had been arranged that I should make this quiet, lonely spot my temporary home.

Confined thus to a narrow area, I had now to look forward to a period of inactivity, in addition to which I had the prospect, by no means pleasant, of submitting to a scale of diet that was straitly limited. Our provisions were all but exhausted. Under the most favourable circumstances, Mohammed could not be expected back in less than twenty days, and the slender supply left for the maintenance of the few men who remained behind as my body-guard would have to be carefully doled out in daily rations to last out the time. Our cattle had all long since been slaughtered; goats were nowhere to be had; nor could any hunting-booty

reasonably be expected. For myself the only animal food on which I could rely consisted of twenty tiny fowls of the diminutive Niam-niam breed, which Mohammed, from some unknown source, had procured for me, reckoning that he had thus provided me with one daily meal during the three weeks in which he would be absent. This valuable treasure was, however, a cause of some solicitude; in the first place a strong cage had to be constructed to secure them against the robbers of the night; and, secondly, we could not help begrudging them every grain that they consumed of our scanty stock of eleusine.

My daily allowance now consisted of a fowl, scarcely as large as a partridge, and one single slice of the coarse and bitter eleusine bread; but these, in the bracing air of the Niam-niam and in the cool stimulating temperature of the early rains, were far from being sufficient nourishment, and I began to be conscious of the pangs of downright hunger. The season was very unfavourable for hunting, but even if it had been otherwise I should have felt it undesirable, under the circumstances, to have wandered far from my quarters: the ruined condition of our palisade left us especially exposed to an attack, and with our small supply of firearms it was advisable to be constantly on the spot. It is to this day a mystery to me how the Bongo bearers who remained with us supported life during this period of privation; but somehow or other they had a wonderful knack of discovering all kinds of edibles in the forest, and stirred up by their example I eagerly grasped at anything the wilderness afforded to supply the deficiency of my meagre cuisine.

In the middle of the open space of the old Seriba there happened to be a huge white ant-hill of long standing, and this rendered some timely assistance in our need; every night after there had been heavy rain, myriads of white ants appeared on the red clods and might be gathered by the bushel; they belonged to the fat-bodied, winged class, and

were what are known as "sexual males." Immediately upon issuing from their dark retreat, and after a short swarming, they assemble in masses at the foot of their hill and proceed to divest themselves of their wings, leaving their heavy bodies helpless on the ground. This removal of their wings does not seem a matter of difficulty; the instinct of the insects seems to prompt them to throw the wings quite forward till they can be so mutilated by the front feet that they completely drop off. Any insects that remained upon the wing were soon brought to the ground by bundles of lighted straw being placed under them, so that it might literally be said to rain white ants. Baskets full were then readily collected for our table. Partly fried and partly boiled they helped to compensate for our lack of grease of any kind. Not unfrequently I mixed them with uncooked corn and ate them from the hollow of my hand; they made just the kind of food that would be good for birds, and, *more avium*, I took them. If the day only chanced to be rainy, the night was sure to be provided with a feast; there was not one of us who had not cause to be thankful for the strange abundance of the ant-hill.

Fortunately I found that I had a little reserve of the extract of meat which had been obtained from the Monbuttoo goats; with this and with a fair supply of bread and vegetables I could have managed for myself very well; but unluckily there were no vegetables in the district; the last of the tubers had been devoured and the gourd-season had not yet arrived. It was revolting to me to boil and eat the gourd leaves like the natives, and I therefore endeavoured to procure some of the *Melochia* of the Arabs, a species of *Corchorus* which is found both wild and cultivated throughout the entire district of the Nile. It was upon this plant alone, boiled like spinach, that (with the aid of thyme-tea) Sir Samuel Baker records that he subsisted for some weeks at the time when he was treacherously deserted by the natives

on his way back from the lake. At this period, however, of my residence on the Nabambisso, the Melochia was only just beginning to sprout, and with all my diligence in looking for it I could never get more than the scantiest of platefuls at a time.

As the discomforts of our situation increased and became more and more trying, I was thrown upon my resources to seek enjoyment of a more ideal nature, and in the neighbouring woods I found the best of compensation for all my bodily privations. Whenever I was beginning to feel more than ordinarily disconsolate I would hurry off to the thickets, and there amongst the splendid and luxuriant vegetation I was sure to find an engagement which would, at least for a time, draw away my thoughts even from the appeal of hunger. In hardly any portion of the world ought an enthusiastic botanist to suffer *ennui*; wherever there exists a germ of life, there is also a stimulant to his spirit; but hardly a scene can be imagined calculated to enlist his whole interests more and to divert him better than the exuberance of bountiful nature such as was revealed upon the Nabambisso.

The few books that I had brought out with me I had read over and over again. The perusal of Speke's journal and Baker's accounts of his difficulties gave me great interest, and I realized very fully a situation which appeared to coincide so entirely with my own. During my forced solitary hours I was only too glad to get hold of any printed matter whatever that was new to me. My extensive store of grey blotting-paper, that served to protect the dried plants was silent enough; but the books into which every few pages of the paper were stitched were fastened on the backs by strips of paper which I carefully removed and found to be a source of occasional diversion. This paper, as being stout in quality, chanced to be cut from the *Times*; and the articles on the leading topics of the day, the correspondence with the

editor, and even the concisest of advertisements, all supplied a peculiar interest. It was strange to sit here, in the very heart of Central Africa, and to read of the tropical wonders that graced the Crystal Palace, where the music that floated round might be the echoes of the voice of Titiens. Tantalizing it was to read of "Mountain port at twenty shillings a dozen," and to learn that it was comparatively free from alcohol; it made us (involuntary abstainers as we were) thirstier than ever, and joyfully enough would my Bongo bearers have had some cases to convey. I wished myself back again in the days when we were fighting the A-Banga; for though they were days of peril, they were days of plenty, and the old Spanish proverb would ever and again force itself upon my recollection, "No misfortune comes amiss to a full stomach." At night my dream was akin to Baker's dream of pale ale and beef-steak. It seemed as though one only required a good meal's victuals that he might die in peace, and be contented to have for his epitaph the saying of the warrior of the Roman Empire, "What I have eaten and what I have drunk is all that now remains to me." Nothing could elevate the vision of the mind for long; tied down to material things, it was impotent to soar; and food and drink became the single and prevailing theme which we were capable of handling by day or dreaming of by night.

Reduced to this low and depressed condition were the feelings which I experienced during the later portion of those lonely weeks that I spent in the great shed, now half-ruined, that had formed the assembly hall of the old Seriba. The stipulated time of solitude was drawing rapidly to a close, but still nothing was heard from Mohammed. Our necessities became more and more urgent: to remain where we were became more and more impracticable; and to escape from the disasters that were threatening us I proposed to set off on an excursion to the nearest settlement of

any Khartoomers. Forty miles to the west of our present quarters was a Seriba belonging to Tuhamy, and a lofty mountain situated in its vicinity offered special attractions for a visit; the journey would be safe, as the route led across Mohammed's own territory, and on our way we should pass another Seriba upon the eastern frontiers of his district. Ten bearers would suffice to carry my baggage for this little trip, and I need hardly say how glad they were to accompany me under the prospect of ending, or at least gaining a respite from, their season of privation.

We started off on our march upon the 21st, and after crossing the Boddoh brook and two smaller rivulets we arrived at the Hoo. This little stream meandered through a wood remarkable for its diversity of trees, amongst which I was surprised to see the *Sparmannia* of Southern Africa. The banks themselves were enclosed by dense bushes of a new species of *Stipularia*, of which the numerous blossoms, half-hidden in their purple sheaths, gave a singular appearance to the plant. It belongs to the characteristic stream-vegetation of the spot.

Beyond the Hoo we came to a ravine of a hundred feet in depth with a charming hedge of zawa trees; and then crossing two more brooks, copiously supplied with water and both running to the north, we terminated our twelve miles' march and found a hospitable reception in the huts of Ghitta, an overseer of some of the Niam-niam subject to my friend Mohammed. After our recent privations we seemed quite overpowered by the liberality of the entertainment offered us by Ghitta; he procured corn for the bearers, he brought out several flasks of eleusine-beer, and more than satisfied all reasonable claims upon his hospitality. To the great diversion of the assembled villagers I shot a great number of turtle-doves in the adjacent trees. This species, with the white ring round the throat, is found all through the year in well-nigh every part of Central Africa, although

it appears to avoid certain localities, such for instance as the vicinity of our ruined Seriba, where we should have been most thankful for such an addition to our scanty stores; the birds, however, manifestly have a preference for particular places, but wherever they resort they are generally to be noticed amongst the foliage in immense flocks.

The soil of this region was once more broken by deep clefts, and was alternately a series of gentle undulations and of deep-cut ravines. Beyond Ghitta's village the road turned towards the south-east and crossed a brook; further on it passed through a district enlivened by numerous farmsteads and where some sorghum-fields testified to the influence of their neighbours on the east upon the industry of the inhabitants. The district was named Madikamm, being called so after the second brook to the east of Ghitta's hamlets. The majority of men capable of bearing arms had accompanied Mohammed on his campaign; consequently the huts had hardly any other occupants but women and children, who retreated shyly as we advanced, and shut themselves up in their pretty dwellings.

The votive pillars adorned with many a variety of skulls demonstrated that at certain seasons the hunting booty must be very large; the diversity of antelopes, however, was far smaller than amongst the Bongo and Mittoo, a circumstance that recalled to my mind an observation made by many travellers in South Africa who have affirmed that wherever there are many elephants there is comparatively a scarceness in the number of antelopes: the greater beasts, doubtless, make too much commotion in the forests, and in their wanderings by night disturb the haunts and hiding-places of the more timid game.

Leaving the villages of Madikamm in our rear, we found ourselves on the edge of a great swamp a thousand feet wide, which moved its insidious course northwards in the direction of the adjacent territory of the Babuckur. It was covered

in its entire width by a huge, half-floating mass of papyrus, which, called "Bodumoh" by the Niam-niam, gives its name to the marshy waters. This was the first specimen of the papyrus that I had seen in the depth of the interior at so great a distance from the two main affluents of the Upper Nile, and it gave a new character to the locality; it is, however, a characteristic of the swampy region on the upper course of the Sway, where the reduced and meagre remnant of Babuckur, sorely pressed on every side, drag out their miserable lives; their frontiers were only a league to the north of the spot where we crossed.

After leaving the Bodumoh, our road took an E.S.E. direction, which it retained as far as Tuhamy's Seriba. At the first hamlets we reached, the inhabitants viewed us with considerable distrust, as the soldiers from the nearest Khar-toom settlements, and those who intended to pass through Mohammed's territory, had most arbitrarily levied some heavy taxes upon them.

Beyond the huts were open steppes covered with towering grass which shadowed many shrubs that were entirely new to me, and excited my liveliest interest. Not a few of them were in full bloom, and I walked along carrying a bouquet that it was no exaggeration to call magnificent. The natives might seem fully justified in reviving amongst themselves my name of "Mbarik-pah."

I may mention that careful as was the method which I have described of our wading over the marshy swamps it was not uniformly attended with success. More than once in attempting to cross without assistance at the head of my little troop I had come to grief; and now once again, at the very next swamp we came to, it was my fate to have an involuntary bath. The dilemma caused us some delay. I was proceeding leisurely along, but coming to a deep hole concealed completely by the long swamp grass I suddenly fell in and was fished out again by my people thoroughly

drenched and plastered over with an envelope of mud. It took an hour while I changed my clothes and while the filth was cleansed from the articles I was carrying.

Although the temperature was really as high as that of a July day in our northern clime, the sky nevertheless was overcast and the weather windy, so that it was with chattering teeth and an inward chill that I continued my march along the steppe. All prospect of the surrounding country was obstructed by the towering grass. There was no distant vision to fill the eye, and there was little to relieve the monotony but the radiant blossoms, red and blue, of the flowering shrubs.

After a while our course was interrupted by a brook fifteen feet in width called the Kishy. This was too deep to ford; the method therefore was adopted of bending down the boughs of the largest shrubs upon the banks, thus forming a fragile bridge, over which, by dint of caution, we contrived to make our tottering way without the misadventure, only too probable, of losing our balance. The Kishy speeds swiftly along over the level steppe in the Babuckur country, and, after receiving the Bodumoh, contributes materially to the volume of the Sway, which in that region has already assumed the dimensions of a considerable river.

The country beyond the Kishy retained the same character as that along which we had been passing. By the side of a little spring called Nambia, that went rippling between the bare gneiss flats, we made a halt for the purpose of following up some guinea-fowl, of which the notes could be heard at no great distance; the whole district teemed with these birds, and I could now again anticipate a daily meal such as I had not had for months.

Hidden deep amongst the long thick grass I here found an aloe, of which the blossoms were of a greenish cast; it was a plant that except to an eye keenly looking for botanical rarities would have been overlooked entirely.

Whilst we were making our halt, I was surprised by a visit from Merdyan, the local chief; he had heard of my arrival, and, accompanied by several natives, he had now come to give me welcome. Merdyan was one of Mohammed's black body-guard, and had been entrusted with the supervision of the eastern frontier of his territory; with three guns at his disposal, he had been appointed to the command of a little Seriba surrounded with fine fields of maize, which were bounded by a ravine watered by a copious brook. To reach this settlement we had to retrace our steps for a full league along a road that gradually descended through a cultivated country. A fine prospect lay open before us; upon the south-eastern horizon rose the imposing mass of Mount Baginze, and a little to the north a pointed hill called Damvo. On this day's march we accomplished a distance of about eight leagues; towards the close of it we came to one of the groves of *Encephalartus*, which are scattered about the district, and known amongst the Niam-niam as *Mvooeh-piah*.

We enjoyed very comfortable accommodation in Merdyan's Seriba; the huts were clean and well-built, and I had an opportunity of renewing my observations on the domestic arrangements of the Niam-niam. A delicacy to which I had long been unaccustomed was provided for me in some fresh ears of maize, and corn was not wanting for all my people. There were two things, however, which could not be obtained. We had neither salt nor any kind of oil or grease. Riharn, having lost his proficiency, seemed to be now losing his memory; he had quite forgotten to bring the salt that would be required on our way, and the little grease that could be procured had far too much the suspicion of being mixed with human fat to make it in any way a desirable adjunct to my dishes. Our own supply of butter had been left behind intentionally, as it would be required during our coming journey to the north. Whatever food

the natives offered to my people, even to my negroes, only filled them with horror and disgust. Amongst many others who came to the Seriba to satisfy their curiosity about me, there was one fat old man who had his wallet full of victuals hanging to his side, without which no Niam-niam ever quits his home. My little Bongo, Allagabo, spying out two tempting little brown paws, like those of a roast sucking-pig, projecting from the bag, was inquisitive enough to peep in to make a closer investigation of the contents. He got a sharp cuffing for his pains, but he was not likely to have been much tempted, as the delicacy in question turned out to be a roast dog! At another time, my Niam-niam interpreter, Gyabir, who was here in the full enjoyment of his native food, offered Allagabo a dish of lugma (corn-pap), in which were some fragments of flesh that looked like the limbs of a little bird; but Allagabo's disgust can be better imagined than described when he discovered he was eating the legs of a frog!

I spent one day with Merdyan for the purpose of inspecting the neighbourhood, and in the course of my rambles I bagged enough guinea-fowl to supply my whole retinue. For the first time, too, I killed a black rhinoceros-bird (*Tetmoceras abyssinicus*). I had previously seen these birds in the Seribas in Bongoland, where they are so far tamed that they strut about fearlessly amongst the other denizens of the poultry-yard.

As I was returning in the evening I was witness of a circumstance that I imagine very rarely could be seen. In the twilight two great forms rushed past us, and were so close upon us that we involuntarily started on one side; the pursuit was so hot that neither of the two animals seemed to be aware of our presence, as in a few seconds they doubled and rushed by us for a second time. My people persisted in saying that it was a hyæna chasing an antelope; but as I was aware that a hyæna seldom hunts down any living prey,

I was unconvinced, and went early on the following morning to investigate the traces that were left. On arriving at the spot I found that the assertion of my attendants had been correct, and that the footmarks were undoubtedly those of a spotted hyæna and a hartebeest; the tracks were deep and multifold, and testified to the violence of the pursuit.

The spotted hyæna (*H. crocuta*) is somewhat rare so deep in the interior of the continent, and even in the cattle-countries of the Dinka it can hardly be said to be common. It is probably driven, through lack of carrion left by the lion, to seek for its subsistence by chasing living prey. This species is far more savage, as well as more powerful, than the striped hyæna of the northern deserts, and appears to be distributed over the whole of Africa below the latitude of 17° N. The skins are frequently used by the Niam-niam for aprons; they exhibit a great variety of markings and differ considerably in colour, the spots being sometimes light and indistinct, sometimes, on the contrary, dark and well-defined. The reports of the Niam-niam refer to two species, one large and one small, as being found in their land; the smaller kind being probably the variegated hyæna observed by Speke upon the eastern coast, and apparently a cross between the spotted and the striped.

The route from Merdyan's Seriba to Tuhamy's was through an uninhabited district, and was crossed by so many streams that it was quite a matter of difficulty to determine it. Merdyan undertook to provide me with guides, if I desired it; but as any intercourse between the two Seribas was exceedingly rare, and as I heard a long and loud discussion, before we started, as to which was the right direction, I could not place much reliance upon my conductors. The country through which we had to pass was perfectly flat; the trees, too, were frequently so high and the paths were so narrow that we were unable to get a glimpse of either of the two mountains which we had previously observed from

the high ground on the west. Neither of these mountains could be much more than seven leagues distant. The ignorance of our guides caused us considerable embarrassment. We were in continual dread of encroaching upon the adjacent territory of the hostile Babuckur, where we should be entirely at the mercy of the cannibal tribe.

On leaving the Seriba we followed the eastward course of a little brook named the Nakemaka. We kept beside it until it reached the spot where it joined the larger stream called the Mahbodey, which we crossed by our previous method of bending down the pendant branches of the overhanging bushes, and then hopping like birds from branch to branch as best we could. All these affluents of the Upper Sway inclined to the north; all of them, moreover, had a marked descent. The next of them was known as the Meiwah, and about a league beyond we came to the actual mainstream of the Sway, which was here thirty feet in width, and really wider than the united measurements of the two streams above; such of them as we did not cross by our improvised bridges we had to pass by swimming.

After a while we came to a large forest of butter-trees, the first and last that I saw in the country of the Niam-niam. The underwood was so dense, and its foliage so fully developed, that we could not see more than ten paces in any direction; our guides completely lost their way, and, without a clue to our proper path, we wandered on. To add to our perplexity the sky became overcast with the tokens of an approaching storm, and we thus lost whatever aid we might have got from the direction of the shadows. With a vista contracted as ours the compass was of little service, and in a country like this it was very inadvisable to leave the beaten paths or to penetrate into any untried thickets. We were glad enough when we at last caught sight of two deserted huts in the middle of the wilderness. The floods of rain were beginning to descend, and we were thankful for

any shelter. The storm that had burst upon us continued with such unremitted violence that we were compelled to resign ourselves to the necessity of passing the night in this wild spot. The interior of the huts swarmed with creeping things of the most revolting character, in comparison with which the most obnoxious vermin that are ever found in houses within the range of civilization would appear mere mild and insignificant domestic nuisances. By heaping up a pile of fresh leaves and grass, I contrived a sort of covering that protected me from actual contact with the crawling things, but the lullaby that buzzed and hummed around me was none of the pleasantest. There were the swarms of white ants that were incessantly gnawing and scratching at my leafy coverlet; there were snakes and lizards rustling in the cobwebbed thatch above: there were mice scampering and squeaking on the ground below. However, for the condition of things there was no help: the best must be made of it; so I shut my ears to the commotion, and resigned myself successfully to the blissful unconsciousness of slumber.

When I awoke at dawn the rain was still falling, the heavy drops pattering down like lead upon the leathery leaves of the butter-trees. Hungry and shivering, I sat upon my grass couch and peered out through the narrow doorway into the obscurity of the thickets, where I could see the broad backs of my negroes as they grubbed away with all their might, defiant of the storm, in the hopes of getting something from among the roots to appease their craving. Hunger at last compelled us to brave the weather, and to take our chance at proceeding. We directed our movements at starting towards some mounds of gneiss, that at a little distance we could see picturesquely rising above the trees. Our intention at first was to ascend these elevations, that we might make a better survey of the land around us; but we were spared the necessity of climbing up them, as on reaching their base we fell into a well-defined path which

we did not hesitate to follow. It led us to the brook Shōby, and shortly afterwards to some human habitations.

Our arrival made no little stir among the natives, who had received no intelligence of the presence of a white man in that part of the country, and at first they were inclined to suspect that we must have come with hostile intentions. My Niam-niam, however, soon reassured them, and induced them to provide us with guides for our route. They led us out in an easterly direction, passing through a country that was fairly cultivated, and along which the numbers of guinea-fowl were so large that they kept me fully employed during the march. We had now only one more brook to pass, which was called the Mossulongoo, and this we accomplished in such good time that it was still daylight when we reached the Seriba of Tuhamy. Amongst the inmates of the Seriba my servants recognised several of their former acquaintances at Khartoom, and very enthusiastic were the greetings that were mutually exchanged. The controller of the Seriba received me with the most cordial hospitality, and cleared out his best hut for my accommodation. The hut was enclosed with a high palisade, which gave it an additional protection. The controller's superior and principal in Khartoom was a personage no less important than the chief writer of the *Hokkumdarieh*; and this influential authority had in the previous year given instructions to his subordinate that he was to show me every possible attention if I should chance to pay him a visit.

The Seriba was a halting-place for Tuhamy's ivory expeditions from the Rohl to the Monbuttoo country. Situated as it was on the extreme eastern limit of the Niam-niam territory, it formed an outpost towards the Babuckur land, which Tuhamy's companies were accustomed to consider as their corn magazines, and on which they relied for their supplies to carry them onwards to the south. But the Babuckur were already wearied by the depredations to which

they were thus continually exposed; their impatience made them desperate and exasperated; and a very few days after my departure they made an attack upon the Seriba, burnt it to the ground, and compelled the inhabitants to evacuate the place. Many Nubians as well as many Niam-niam lost their lives in the engagement, and the few that escaped had to make their way to the nearest Seriba, which was that established in Mondoo, at the distance of a long day's journey, situated amongst the Zilei mountains, of which the spurs and projecting terraces were visible on the eastern horizon. Subsequently to this, all Tuhamy's settlements passed by a special contract into the hands of Ghattas's son.

The brook upon which the Seriba was situated was called the Annighei. The chieftain in command of the Niam-niam in the district had formerly been independent, but had been deprived of his authority by Tuhamy's companies. His name was Indimma, and he was one of the numerous sons of Renje, but not to be confounded with the powerful chief of the same name, who was a son of Keefa. He came now to offer me his welcome, and communicated to me many interesting details about the surrounding country.

I made a little excursion to an elevation of gneiss a few miles to the east of the Seriba, so as to gain a point from which I might survey the surrounding mountains and make some observations to verify the position of the various peaks. The detached ranges for the most part were situated from ten to fifteen leagues from the site I had chosen for my survey, and I should imagine their height to vary from 4000 to 5000 feet above the level of the sea. All those who were capable of giving me any information at all upon the subject agreed in representing that the entire district was distinguished as Mundo or Mondoo, and that the principal chain of hills was called Mbia Zilei; also that at the foot of the mountains was the village of Bedelly, the native local overseer, close to which was another Seriba belonging to

Tuhamy. Between me and the mountains flowed the river Issoo, a stream which I was assured was at this season fifty feet broad, and so deep that whoever attempted to ford it would be immersed up to the neck. The entire region was rich in corn, especially in sorghum. Several hundred bearers laden with it arrived during my stay at the Seriba, and I took the opportunity of laying in a stock for myself; it is difficult to obtain sorghum in the Niam-niam countries, and it was long since I had had grain of such a superior quality.

All the Niam-niam of whom I was able to make inquiries assured me that the natives of Mundo are a distinct people, differing from themselves both in habits and in dialect; their precise ethnographical position I could never determine, but I should presume that they approximate most nearly to their Mittoo neighbours on the north, and more especially to the Loobah and Abakah.

This Mundo or Mondoo is not to be confounded with the Mundo to the south of the Bongo, which Petherick reports that he visited in February 1858; it is the name of the western enclave of the scattered Babuckur. But the Mundo of which I am speaking is marked upon the map by Peney, who in 1861 penetrated westwards from Gondokoro as far as the Ayi or Yei; Petherick too has inserted the district upon his map,* under the name of the Makaraka mountains, and has assigned it to exactly the same locality as I have myself done. In spite of Petherick's protestation, many geographers have made the two Mundos identical, and have thus fallen into the not unnatural conjecture that the Yei is the upper course of the Dyoor, a conjecture of which my journey has fully demonstrated the fallacy.

The Issoo, as the upper course of the Tondy is here called, forms the western boundary of this mountainous district;

* 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' vol. xxxv.

along the south and far to the east (probably as far as the source-regions of the Yei) there stretches an offshoot of the Niam-niam territory. This section of the Niam-niam is called Idderoh, and is subject to an independent chieftain, a brother of Indimma's, named Bingio, who had formerly been an interpreter in Petherick's station in Neangara. The river that waters his district is called the Nzoro. On all maps this territory of the Idderoh figures as Makkarakka; but, as I have observed, this is merely a collective name given to the Niam-niam by their neighbours on the east.

We had a day's rest in the hospitable Seriba, and were well entertained with meat and vegetables. The neighbourhood was interesting, and yielded several novelties for my collection. One very brilliant ornament of the woods at this season, which I had never seen in greater abundance, was the Abyssinian Protea, a shrub about four or five feet high, with great rosy heads like our garden peony. Another plant, one of the Araliaceæ, the Cussonia, which is usually only a low shrub, here attained quite the dimensions of a tree, and its fan-shaped foliage crowned a stem little less than thirty feet in height. In the damp grass near the brooks flourished a number of ground orchids with remarkably fine blossoms.

A yet richer booty, however, was in store for me. A few miles to the south of the Seriba, jutting up like an island from the surrounding plain, and visible from afar, rose the massy heights of Mount Baginze. There I did not doubt I should realize the fruition of many expectations.

We started upon the 27th, under the escort of a small body of native soldiers, from the Seriba. Gyabir was in the best of spirits. He had just achieved a great object of his desire in attaining a wife. The controller of the Seriba had a large number of slaves, and as one more or one less made no appreciable difference to him, he had presented Gyabir with a young girl of the Loobah tribe. My interpreter had

long been desirous of securing a partner of his lot, and had many times solicited both Mohammed and Surroor to procure him a consort, but hitherto his request had been made in vain. It is not an easy matter for a man without some means to get married in Africa: if he negotiates for himself he has to satisfy the demands of the bride's father; but by applying to the controller or ruler of the district, who can exercise an absolute authority in these matters, he may succeed in obtaining a wife without previously paying down any sum by way of compensation.

We marched for about two leagues in a west and south-west direction, and once again crossed the little brooks that the Sway receives on its right-hand bank; at length we reached the pointed gneiss mound called Damvo, which rises about 200 feet above the level of the plain. I mounted the eminence, so as to employ its summit as the second station for my observations of the mountain chains. The rugged rocks were clothed with *Sansevieria*, and to the very top charming shrubs made good their way from between their clefts. The view was magnificent. It was the first mountainous landscape that I had seen during my journey that exhibited the true characteristics of African orography. All around were elevations, more or less conspicuous, rising like bastions isolated on the plain; whilst high over all reared the crest of Mount Baginze. The western side of the mountain was precipitous, and might almost be described as perpendicular; towards the north, on the other hand, it sloped downwards in gradual ridges: in form it reminded me of many of the isolated mountains of Southern Nubia, and more especially of those in the province of Taka.

Mount Baginze is only four miles to the S.S.E. of Damvo, but this short distance had to be accomplished by a circuitous and troublesome route leading across deep fissures and masses of loose rock, and often through grass of enormous height; half-way we came to a rapid brook hastening along

through a deep cleft, which we were able to leap across. This was *the source of the Dyoor*. It was the first actual source of any of the more important affluents of the White Nile to which any European traveller had ever penetrated. My Niam-niam escort, who were natives of the district, positively asserted that this brooklet was the Sway, and thus plainly demonstrated that, however insignificant this little vein of running water might appear, they were accustomed to consider it as the highest section of the waters that contributed to the formation of the Dyoor. The Sway, they said, was the largest and longest river of their land; Baginze was their loftiest mountain; and this was the most important stream that issued from its clefts.

Before actually setting foot upon Baginze we had still to make an ascent through a fine forest, but in due time we reached the mountain and made our encampment close beneath the perpendicular wall of the western flank. The halting-place was upon the edge of a deep ravine, where a bright thread of water rippled merrily along over rocks covered with moss and graceful ferns. It was too late in the day to attempt to ascend farther than to the summit of a sloping spur projecting towards the north-west from the southern side of the mountain, and which was about half the height of the mountain itself.

The first few steps that I took were quite enough to convince me of the entire accordance of the flora with that of the Abyssinian highlands. Masses of brilliant aloes, with their scarlet and yellow blossoms, grew luxuriantly upon the slopes of gneiss; the intervals between them were overspread with a mossy carpet of *Selaginella rupestris*, whilst clusters of blue lobelia reared themselves like violets, only of a brighter hue, from the surface of the soil. Here and there, in singular contrast to the tender foliage of the shady hollows, lending moreover a new and striking character to the vegetation, I found, cropping up from amidst the rocks, the thick fleshy

leaves of that remarkable orchid, the *Eulophia*; and on the still higher declivities I met with yet another true representative of the Abyssinian flora in a new species of *Hymenodictyon*, a dwarf tree of the class of the *Rubiaceæ*, which in some form or other appear to embrace at least a tenth of all the plants of Africa in these regions.

Wherever one of the bright bubbling streams was seen, like a shining thread upon the grey monotony of the rocks, there I was pretty sure to find the *Ensete*, or wild African plantain. This is a plant which is never seen below an altitude of 3000 feet above the sea. It was now to be observed in every stage of its growth, sometimes being small like the head of a cabbage, and sometimes running out to a length of twenty feet with its fruit attached to a short thick stem in the form of an onion. The tender leaves were marked with a midrib of purple-red. It struck me that here in the wilderness this plant, which has become so common a favourite in our greenhouses, is distinguished by a much shorter leaf-stem and by a more compact appearance than it bears in its cultivated form when its growth is spreading and graceful. Not unfrequently the *Ensete* of the mountains bore a striking resemblance to young specimens of the *Musa sapientium*, though it exceeded it in the number of the leaves it bore, there being occasionally as many as forty on a single plant. I found it here in full bloom, but without any prospect of fruit; it differs from other representatives of its class by losing its leaves at the time of its flowering, and then has the appearance of an elongated onion on a shaft some six or eight feet in length, on the top of which rests a compact truss of bloom. Although I never observed any side sprouts from the wild *Ensete*, it by no means follows that they are never to be seen: a single authenticated instance of the kind would demonstrate almost beyond a doubt what is already in so many respects probable, namely, that the *Ensete* is the original stock of the cultivated African plantain.

We had quickly improvised some huts from the long grass at the foot of the mountain, and they afforded us secure and sufficiently comfortable shelter from the down-pour of rain that lasted throughout the night. On the following morning I was disappointed to find that the sky was still burdened with storm-clouds, whilst a fine, drizzling mist obscured the greater part of the view that we had proved to be so lovely.

My sojourn in the neighbourhood was limited to a single day, since the Seriba was suffering from the general dearth of provisions, and could ill afford to entertain us: there was consequently no help for it, but if the ascent of the mountain were made at all it must be made in defiance of the heavy rain. I was quite aware that the adverse weather would make the task altogether uncongenial to my guides, and I was not very much surprised to find that they had made off during the night. I had thus to start off on my own responsibility. My Nubian servants remained behind to warm their shivering limbs over the camp-fires, so that, followed only by my two Niam-niam, carrying the portfolios for my plants, I set out upon my enterprise.

I turned towards the northern declivity, which slanted in almost an unbroken line from the summit to the base. At first my view was necessarily circumscribed, and it was only after a good deal of clambering and by a very circuitous route along rugged places, overhung with bushes, and across fissures full of water, that I succeeded in finding the correct path. The wind was so strong that although my broad hat was weighted with pebbles I was obliged to leave it below. The highest point of the ridge I found to be at the south of the summit, and thence I had a magnificent prospect, being able to see for fifty or sixty miles in an east and north-east direction. Not far short of a hundred different mountain-peaks were visible, and of these I took measurements of the angles between the more im-

portant, which I subsequently combined with the angles which I had already observed. I also made a drawing of the entire panorama around me.

The upper course of the Tondy was plainly visible, and beyond it were caught the terraced ridges of the country to the east. The northern and eastern spurs of Baginze were especially picturesque; the elevated level of the ground at the base was not apparent from above, so that they stood out like isolated eminences from a uniform plain: three more spurs a few miles to the south-east also appeared completely detached: they were in a straight line one behind another, the names of the two most northerly being Bonduppa and Nagongoh. Somewhere near them was a Seriba belonging to Poncet's company, who had reduced the former independent chieftain Bendo (another of the many sons of Renje) to the same state of submission as Tuhamy's company had brought his brother Indimma.

The measurement that I took upon the spot gave Baginze a relative height of 1350 feet; but the barometrical observations made at the base, which would have determined its exact altitude above the level of the sea, have unfortunately been lost; I believe, however, that I am not far wrong in estimating the entire height to be about 3900 feet.

The bulk of the rock of which the mountain was composed consisted of a gneiss that was so abundant in mica that in many places it had the appearance of being actual mica schist; a speciality in its formation being the immense number of cyanite crystals that pervaded it in all directions: a similar conglomeration of "cyanite gneiss" is very rare, but amongst other places it may be observed on Mount St. Gotthard in Switzerland. Wherever the springs issued at the foot of the mountain there were wide boulder-flats of broken stones, and here the sheets of mica and the prisms of cyanite, an inch or two in length, lay cleanly washed and strewn one upon another in such thick confusion that I

had to wade through them as through a pile of rubbish. I collected several specimens of the rock, which I brought to Europe.

Massive in its grandeur, isolated, and worn by time, Mount Baginze thus stood before me as a witness of a former era in the world's history and as a remnant of the lofty mountain-chain which must have once formed the southern boundary of the Nile district.

There was an entire absence of large trees everywhere, and the higher regions of the mountain bore but a very scanty vegetation. Contented, however, with the few botanical discoveries that the toilsome trip had yielded, I began to think of returning. It had taken me four hours to make the ascent of the mountain, but being now aware of the correct path, a single hour was all I spent in getting back to our encampment. In spite of the unpropitious weather I felt that I could have enjoyed myself for some days in exploring this enticing neighbourhood: the mountain air was even fresher and more invigorating than what I had been breathing in the Niam-niam country—and this is saying not a little; for, in spite of their meagre diet, the Nubian soldiers who came thither sickly and weakened by their idle Seriba-life always returned from their Niam-niam campaigns fat and healthy, and with renewed strength and vigour. My attendants unfortunately did not sympathise with my ideal enjoyments, but made such loud and bitter complaints at the increasing inclemency of the weather that I should not have dared to prolong my stay, even if I could.

On the third morning, then, after our arrival we began to return. Although continually in doubt as to our path, we were fortunate in hitting upon the route that was shortest, and, crossing the Shöby at a spot where it was contracted by gneiss walls and made a bend to the north, we reached the rocks in the forest of butter-trees at which so recently we had passed such a wretched night. Before it was dark we

once more entered Merdyan's Seriba. The long march of nine hours, made doubly arduous by the many watercourses that had intercepted it, had been one of the most fatiguing that I had experienced. I took a day's rest, and amused myself by shooting guinea-fowl, the sport being so successful that I supplied my people with as many of the birds as they could eat in two days. We performed the rest of our journey through incessant rain, and on the evening of the 1st of June found ourselves reinstated in the old Seriba on the Nabambisso.

Here I received satisfactory intelligence from Mohammed. The condition of things had decidedly improved. Still the store of corn was small; but the gourds had ripened during our absence, fresh maize had been brought to the Seriba, and, best of all, the guinea-fowl had effected a lodgment in the neighbourhood, so that we had a constant supply of animal food ready at hand. As a consequence of the continual rains edible funguses had sprung up in such abundance that for days together I dined off guinea-fowl's liver and mushrooms. In every respect the mushrooms resembled those which we use in Europe.

I may mention that a large buffalo-hunt, to which all the Bongo were invited, came in as a timely diversion, and that day after day, with my gun in my hand, I was up and doing.

Before many days had elapsed the main body of Mohammed's corps returned from their campaign. Only a portion of the missing ivory had been recovered, for Wando, under a superstitious dread of the intimations of his augury, had persistently remained concealed in the most inaccessible places, and consequently the hostilities had been mainly directed against his brother Mbeeoh. Contrary to the general practice of the Niam-niam princes, Mbeeoh had been personally engaged in the conflict and had exhibited remarkable bravery. On one occasion it had been with the greatest difficulty that Mohammed had held his own against

the hordes of his opponent, and in a raging storm had been obliged to erect a kind of rampart, made of straw, to afford a shelter from which anything like a steady fire might be opened upon the assailants. The chances were dead against Mohammed's side, but it is notorious that the natives hardly ever follow up any advantages offered to them either by a downpour of rain or by the obscurity of night; and very frequently they lost the most promising of opportunities for crushing their Nubian oppressors.

Just before Mohammed himself returned there was a considerable commotion amongst our Bongo bearers. A circumstance occurred that naturally excited some consternation. The bearers who had been left with me in the old Seriba were in the habit of scouring the neighbouring fields and forests every day in search of victuals for themselves. One evening three of the party who had gone out did not return, and their companions had no hesitation in avowing their belief that they had been captured, and that they would most certainly be killed and eaten by the inhabitants of the adjacent district. Early on the following morning all the Bongo and most of the Nubians who were with me started off in a body to explore the neighbourhood and to follow up as best they might the traces of the missing men. According to the statements of the Bongo, the crime had been committed in the district under the control of Maddah, to the north of the Seriba. In that direction the party bent their steps. Their supposition was apparently correct, for after following the tracks into a wood they found that they terminated in a ghastly pool of blood. Maddah was forthwith seized and hurried to the Seriba, where he was charged with being answerable for the disappearance of the men. In evident confusion and with much excitement he began a long and incoherent preamble; he declared that the blood was that of an animal which had been slaughtered on the previous day; he owned, indeed, about the three Bongo,

that he had seen them running across his territory and had had no doubt that they were making an escape to their own homes. This explanation was objected to on the ground that the obstacles on the way were far too great for them ever to have entertained such a design. Maddah then went on to say that some of his Niam-niam people had noticed the fugitives, and had shouted after them to know where they were rushing to, and why they were scampering along at such a pace, but they had received no answer; and deeming it wrong to stand idly by and let the fellows decamp from their owners they had not only pursued them, but had effected their capture and put them into safe custody. To complete his tale he affirmed that, somehow or other, during the night they had contrived to escape; and this was all he knew about them.

The settlement of the business had ultimately to be left to the surviving Bongo. They were not easily satisfied; they insisted most strenuously that, even allowing that there might be some truth in the statement that the Niam-niam had pursued the fugitives, they had only done so with the object of sacrificing them in order to indulge their appetites and to convert their flesh into food. The representation which Maddah gave of the pool of blood was held to be especially unsatisfactory; the bones of the slaughtered animal were demanded as a proof of the fact, but nothing was forthcoming at the hands of the Niam-niam but a few fragments that could be recognised at a glance as belonging to some game that must have been killed months before. Everything, in fact, seemed to confirm the accusation. All agreed that there was nothing to exonerate either Maddah or his people from suspicion. It was consequently decided that as Surroor, the lieutenant in command, was absent, as well as Mohammed, on the campaign, Maddah should be reserved for judgment, and meanwhile must be kept in confinement and placed under the yoke of the sheyba to await his sentence.

But when Mohammed returned he professed to be occupied by more pressing and important business. It did not require much penetration to perceive that there were certain motives of policy which were prompting him to procrastinate the investigation of the affair. The truth was he was anxious, if he could, to keep on good terms with the Niam-niam, knowing that their services were indispensable to him for the usual raid against the Babuckur that had to be undertaken for the purpose of getting a supply of corn to avert the prospect of his caravan being starved. Without their co-operation it would be impossible for his soldiers to cross the marshy swamps. Had the disaster befallen any of the Nubians or Mussulmen at all, there can be no doubt that Mohammed would have acted very differently, and would not have suffered considerations of policy to deter him from making an example of the delinquents.

The raid upon the Babuckur was an expedition that Mohammed did not accompany in person. He entrusted it entirely to Surroor, who took the charge of as many of the subordinate Niam-niam as could be gathered. Just as might be expected, the most savage brutalities were practised on either side. Besides securing the store of corn, which was the main object of the incursion, the Nubians were on the look-out for a capture of female slaves, which they claimed as their special perquisite. The Niam-niam on their part followed the example and did some private kidnapping on their own account; the females that they entrapped they disposed of in the following way: the youngest were destined for their houses, the middle-aged for their agriculture, and the eldest for their caldrons!

The skulls in the Anatomical Museum of Berlin that are numbered 36, 37, and 38 might be supposed capable of unfolding a deplorable tale of these depredations. Some natives brought them to me fresh boiled, only a few days after the raid had been perpetrated; they had heard from

the Monbuttoo that I was accustomed to give rings of copper in exchange for skulls, and as I was not able to bring the poor fellows to life again I saw no reason why I should not purchase their remains in the interests of science. Often I reproached the Nubians of my retinue with allowing such abuses to go on before their eyes, and under the sanction of the flag bearing the insignia of the Holy Prophet; but just as often I received the answer that the Faithful were incompetent to change anything, but must submit to the will of God; it was impressed upon me that the Niam-niam were heathen, and that if the heathen liked to eat each other up, it was no concern of theirs; they had no right to be law-givers or teachers to cannibals.

I had repeated opportunities of observing that the ivory-expeditions of the Khartoomers, although actuated by a certain spirit of enterprise, did not at all contribute to any propagation of Islamism. Negro nations once converted to Mohammedanism are no longer considered as slaves, but are esteemed as brothers. For this reason it was inexplicable to me how Islamism had spread so far in other parts of Central Africa; for although, on the one hand, Islamism is a faith that puts a pressure upon its converts by compelling them to submit to its external prescriptions, such as circumcision; yet, on the other hand, the very conforming to the prescriptions exempts them for ever from all oppression: thus I could not understand why in other parts of the continent the more powerful party had not maintained its material interests by displaying the same indifference as was shown by the Mohammedans in the countries through which I travelled.

Some days after the raid on the Babuckur I was witness of a scene that can never be erased from my memory. During one of my rambles I found myself in one of the native farmsteads; before the door of the first hut I came to, an old woman was sitting surrounded by a group of boys and

girls, all busily employed in cutting up gourds and preparing them for eating; at the door of the opposite hut a man was sitting composedly playing upon his mandolin. Midway between the two huts a mat was outspread; upon this mat, exposed to the full glare of the noon-day sun, feebly gasping, lay a new-born infant: I doubt whether it was more than a day old. In answer to my inquiries I learnt that the child was the offspring of one of the slaves who had been captured in the late raid, and who had now been driven off to a distant quarter, compelled to leave her infant behind, because its nurture would interfere with her properly fulfilling her domestic duties. The ill-fated little creature, doomed to so transient an existence, was destined to form a dainty dish; and the savage group was calmly engaged in their ordinary occupations until the poor little thing should have breathed its last and be ready to be consigned to the seething caldron! I profess that for a moment I was furious. I felt ready to shoot the old hag who sat by without displaying a particle of pity or concern. I was prompted to do something rash to give vent to my sensation of abhorrence; but I was swayed by the protestations of the Nubians ringing in my ears that they were powerless in the matter, and that they had not come to be lawgivers to the Niam-niam. I felt that I was as helpless as they were, and that it would be folly for me to forget how dependent I was upon them. What influence, I was constrained to ask, could my interference have exercised, what could any exhibition of my disgust and indignation avail to check the bias of an entire nation? Missionaries in their enthusiasm, might find a fruitful field for their labours, but they must be very self-denying and very courageous.

The departure of the caravan for the north was delayed for several days in expectation of the return of the corps that had been sent to the west with Ghattas's company, but as no tidings of it were forthcoming we determined, without further procrastination, to proceed upon our way.

Shut out from all prospect of this year making any farther progress to the south, and debarred from the hope of accomplishing any fresh explorations, I own that I began to long for the flesh-pots of Egypt; I confess that the stores that were on their way from Khartoom to await me in my old quarters at the Seriba in Bongoland had a wondrous fascination to my eager imagination. I was also now looking forward that I might make several excursions during the return journey, from which I was sanguine that I might not only make fresh botanical discoveries, but might enlarge my general knowledge of the country.

Our first night-camp was made on the northern frontier of Aboo Sammat's territory, on the banks of a brook near the hamlets of Kulenjo. Until we reached the Hoo we observed no alteration in the condition of the brooks; but the galleries which I was now traversing for the last time seemed in bidding me farewell to have donned their most festal covering, being resplendent with the luxuriant blooms of the *Spathadææ*, one of the most imposing representatives of the African flora. The waters of the Hoo had risen to no inconsiderable degree, and they had so much increased in breadth that they filled the whole of the level bed, which was 35 feet in width. The current flowed at the rate of 150 feet a minute, the water being nowhere more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. Our second night-camp was pitched half-way between the Hoo and the Sway, at a spot where the bush-forest was densest and most luxuriant.

The advancing season brought several changes in our mode of living. I had become so far initiated into African habits, that I now very much preferred a grass hut to a tent. I was moreover getting somewhat out of patience with the ever-recurring necessity of holding up the tent-pole with all my strength during the storms of night, whilst I roused half the camp with my shouts for assistance. At the height of the rainy season the weather, by a beneficent arrangement of

Nature, fortunately follows certain rules from which it deviates very exceptionally; the first few hours of the morning always decided the programme for the day; when once the sky had cleared, we knew that we might resume our march in perfect confidence, and I had the satisfaction of feeling that my papers and herbarium were in no danger of being spoilt by damp, and my companions had the same security for the preservation of their powder and provisions. Towards five in the afternoon, when the sun began to sink, and the distant thunder gave warning of the renewing of the storm, we made a halt, and directed our best attention to prepare our nightly lodging in the wilderness. The baggage was first piled together and protected by the waterproofs, and as soon as this was effected, a number of knives and hatchets were produced and distributed among the "builders." Off they were sent with all despatch. "Now, you fellows, quick to your work. Four of you," I should order my servants, "must be brisk, and get together the grass. *You* two must hack me down the branches, long and strong, and be sharp about it. No shirking now. And *you* have to get the bast. Quick, away! and quick back!" And with this hurrying and driving the work was soon done. Ten minutes, or a little more, brought the men back with the requisite materials. The framework was first erected, the forked boughs being driven into the ground and firmly fastened at the top with ligatures of bast; meanwhile the grass was being bandaged into a huge hollow sheaf, and this, when all was ready, was raised above the structure and fitted like a cap. Thus, in about half an hour, with alacrity, one of these grass huts could be reared, small indeed, and snug as a nest, but nevertheless perfectly waterproof; and thus a sufficient shelter against the nightly rains. The storm might rage and the thunder roll without, but here the weary traveller, in safe and reliable retreat, might enjoy his well-earned repose without misgiving.

By the glimmer of a little oil-lamp of my own contrivance, in which I burnt some questionable-looking grease, of which the smell could not fail to rouse up one's worst suspicions against the natives, I would sit and beguile the hours of the evening as best I could by writing down the experiences of the day. The negroes had no such protection: they would crouch round the camp-fire, which would make their faces glow again with its fitful light, while the rain would pelt pitilessly down upon their backs.

Such was the arrangement of our camp night after night throughout our return journey. But my recollections of the nights spent on the way between the Hoo and the Sway are altogether very unpleasant.

The rain on the following morning did not cease so soon as usual, and our departure was somewhat delayed. We were all of us intensely interested in keeping our own little dry spot free from the drenching force of the rain, when all at once I found my cosy quarters invaded by a whole army of ants. They had succeeded in discovering the driest and warmest place within a circuit of many miles, and now, in countless legions, they took up their quarters in my palliass, which was placed upon a lofty pile of leaves and grass. Their encroachments seemed to come from every side. For a long time I was in perplexity what to do; to leave my hut was impossible, the rain was falling almost in sheets. I endeavoured to protect myself with my clothes, but all in vain. Presently a stratagem suggested itself to my mind; by a happy thought I managed to divert the ants from myself. Dragging some bundles of grass from my bed, I threw them down in detached patches all over the floor, and by way of bait I sprinkled them over with the fragments of food that remained from the supper of the previous night. The scheme answered admirably, and I had the satisfaction of finding the unwelcome guests draw themselves away and give me no more personal annoyance.

Meanwhile a large portion of our caravan had gone on in advance to make the necessary preparations for crossing the Sway. I did not reach the banks myself until nearly noon, and by that time the people were busily employed in conveying the baggage across. The aspect of the Sway was entirely different to what it had been on the 13th of February. The water had risen to the very top of the banks, and was twenty feet deep, with a velocity of two hundred feet a minute. Although the stream was only thirty-five feet wide, the passage over it, in consequence of the entire absence of tree-stems and the small number of bushes on the banks, offered unusual difficulties. The men who had had experience in these Niam-niam expeditions had a method of effecting a transit over the river that I think was peculiar to themselves: they set all the bearers to work to gather as many different kinds of bark as they could, and to extract all the bast out of it, and then to twist it into long stout ropes, a handicraft in which the negroes are very skilful, as in Bongo-land there is an unfailing demand for cordage for hunting-snares and fishing-nets. Having fabricated their ropes, the next thing was to get them stretched across the river. This was effected by practised swimmers, who attached one end firmly into the ground by means of pegs, and swam over with the other. The arrangement of the ropes was such that they were suspended in double rows, one precisely underneath the other, the upper rope being above the stream, the lower being some feet below its surface. Ten expert swimmers then took their stand upon the lower rope, and allowed the stream to force their weight against the upper rope, which supported their chests, but permitted them to have their arms perfectly free for action. Thus supported, in a half-standing, half-floating position, they contrived to keep their hands at liberty, and to pass the packages from one to another.

I confess that it was with a beating heart that I stood

and watched my precious baggage thus handed along over the perilous flood; but the lank, lean arms of the Nubians were competent to their work, and everything was conveyed across in safety. This business of crossing occupied several hours of real exertion. The difficulties of the transit may be conceived, when it is remembered that three-fourths of the negroes are entirely ignorant of the art of swimming, and that there were elephant's tusks being transported which weighed not less than 180 lbs., and consequently required two men to lift them.

We passed the night near Marra's villages, and though it was only a league from the river, it was quite dark before we entered our quarters. The residents had all vacated the district, leaving their fields of half-ripe maize to the mercy of the new comers; although plunder was ostensibly forbidden, it was surreptitiously carried on by our bearers to a very gross extent under cover of the darkness.

The whole of the next day we halted to recruit our strength. I found my amusement in scouring the neighbourhood in search of game. Huts were dotted about here and there, but the country generally was covered with such a wonderful grass vegetation, that any deviation from the beaten paths would have involved the wanderer in great perplexity, and only too probably he would have rambled about for hours before he could recover his way.

As the caravan was on the point of starting on the succeeding morning, and I had just set out at the head of the procession, we were brought to a standstill by the arrival of some messengers bearing a letter to Mohammed from the commander of his corps, that had been sent towards the west. To judge from the date of the letter, the Niam-niam who brought it must have travelled at least forty miles, and perhaps considerably more, in a day.

The letter contained evil tidings. Ghattas's agent and Badry, Abou Sammat's captain, wrote in the utmost despair.

Three chieftains had combined to attack them as they were crossing a gallery on Malingde's territory; three of their number had been slain, and out of their ninety-five soldiers, thirty-two had been so severely wounded as to be *hors de combat*. They had now been closely besieged for six days, and were with extreme difficulty defending themselves behind their abattis; provisions were fast failing; and even water could only be obtained at the risk of losing their lives. Ahmed, the other captain, had fallen at the first outset of the engagement, and his body had not been recovered for interment, but had fallen into the hands of the cannibals. The only means of rescuing the wounded soldiers would be to carry them away in litters, and this could only be effected at the cost of abandoning seventy loads of ivory that had been buried in a swamp. The letter concluded with an urgent appeal for speedy succour, and Mohammed determined to send it without delay; two-thirds of his armed men should be despatched to the relief of the sufferers.

The selection of this relieving-force had to be made at once, and it may be imagined that it was no easy matter for Mohammed to overcome the repugnance of those who had no relative or personal friend in jeopardy. It was naturally a bitter disappointment to those men who were thus marked off for this unexpected service to have to renounce the pleasant prospect of the toils of their expedition being so near its termination, and to be compelled to expose themselves anew to the dubious fortune of war. However, in spite of remonstrances and murmurings, the conscription was completed in a very summary fashion, and it was still early when the remnant of our party, with its undue proportion of bearers, continued our northward march.

It was a bright and lovely forenoon; the steppe was adorned with its summer verdure; what had before been bare red rock, was now covered with tender grass, which reminded one of our own fields of sprouting corn. Africa

seemed like a universal playground, exciting our people to sport and merriment.

We persevered in following our previous well-beaten track. The six meadow-waters that lay between Marra and the hill of Gumango had increased but little since we had last seen them. The lovely park-like country, with its numerous scattered bushes, offered unusual facilities for the chase, and small herds of antelopes, a long unwonted sight, appeared and as rapidly disappeared in the surrounding landscape. Once, however, five hartebeests, at a little distance from our road, made a stand, and eyed the caravan as intently as if they were rooted to the spot. I took deliberate aim at the breast of one of them, and although the whole five wheeled round and galloped off into the thickets, I felt sure that my shot had taken effect; on running up to the spot where the antelopes had been standing, we found enough blood to show us that one of them had certainly been wounded, how severely of course we could not tell. The dogs that I had were of no service for hunting, and had to be kept along with the caravan in the care of servants; but notwithstanding this want of sporting dogs, and in spite of the confusion caused by the multiplicity of tracks, we managed, by following the spots of blood, to make out the proper traces of the wounded hartebeest. As I was approaching one of the smaller thickets, I observed a couple of kites making their circling flight just above the trees; this was a manifest token that the wounded animal was not far off; in another few minutes, as I entered the grove, I caught sight of the yellow body of the beast skulking painfully away from me as best it might, a patch of blood-stained, trampled grass betraying the place where it had thrown itself down.

The arrival of the birds was to me very inexplicable: ten minutes had hardly elapsed since the shot had been fired, and yet here they were, awaiting their prey. The sportsman in Africa (and this is especially the case on bright, sunny

days) has constant experiences of this kind. A few minutes after he has succeeded in bringing down his game he may see some black dots in the sky, which gradually, as they come nearer and nearer, will assume a definite shape and ultimately develop themselves into groups of kites, vultures, or other carrion birds, ever ready to arrest their flight and to appropriate to themselves whatever relics of his booty the hunter may leave behind. It might almost seem, according to the fiction of the ancients, that the sky above was divided into several storeys, and that the birds were ever ready, at the sight of a tempting meal below, to hurry downwards from their topmost region in the sevenfold heaven.

This, however, is mere digression. I return to my hartebeest. After a considerable search we came upon the creature lying lifeless in the grass. It proved to be an animal in suck, and my Niam-niam people, after the wild hunting-custom of the country, filled a small gourd-shell with milk expressed from the udder, and mutually drank to each other's courage and good luck. I had not happened to see the fawn; probably it had not been with the hartebeests when we first caught sight of them.

It may be readily understood from these details, that without dogs, and over so bewildering a country, the capture of game, even after it has been shot, is very often a matter of no trifling difficulty. Moreover, time and distance have to be taken into consideration. Our caravan was often half a league in length, and it was important not to leave any gaps in the procession, as nothing would be easier than for the rear division to mistake the narrow path they had to follow. However fleet the huntsman may be, the antelope is fleetest still, and the impatience and excitement exhibited by the sportsman, hurried because he is travelling, have a tendency to increase the alarm of the animal of which he is in chase, and which is already terrified by the unwonted sight of man. On the level steppe, where the grass grows to a height of

five or six feet, the pursuer can only get momentary glances of the creatures' horns, and all along in his chase he is hardly conscious of making any more advance than if he were buffeting with the waves of the sea.

The animal I had killed was soon cut up, and I made a meal off its roasted liver. Leaving some of my people in charge of the carcase, I set out, designing to return at once to the caravan to despatch some bearers to bring in the spoil to the encampment; but I missed my road, and, notwithstanding the help of my compass, I lost an hour or more in wandering over the rugged paths of an extended elephant haunt. Coming to a depression that was partially under water I saw several leucotis antelopes turn off in front of me, and as the water obstructed my farther progress I made a venture and fired my last shot at a solitary buck that was standing at a distance of not much less than five hundred paces. The animal instantaneously disappeared, and the noise of the report caused several others, in a state of affright, to scamper across the swamp. My Niam-niam were soon at the place where the antelope seemed to have fallen into the earth; to my surprise they soon began to make signs of triumph, and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw them dragging the victim along the ground. It was quite dead and the bullet was in its neck.

Wonderful good fortune had thus, at very slight cost to myself, thrown into my hands an ample supply of meat, which after their recent deprivations gave unbounded satisfaction to my people. But I will not weary the reader with further details of my hunting adventures. Lovers of the chase and admirers of good marksmanship will find a richer field for their entertainment in the record of Sir Samuel Baker's exploits about the Albert Nyanza, which rivals Herodian's description of the sports and prowess of the Emperor Commodus. My own hunting experience, however interesting to myself, was comparatively on a very limited scale.

Carrying with us the piece of meat that was designed for our supper, we entered the camp just as darkness was coming on. I found the people quartered on the slope of a ridge of hills near the frontier of Bendo's district, a league and a half to the south of the residence of the behnky himself. For half the night I sat up making extract of meat from the best parts of the leucotis; a large copper vessel, originally a spirit-still, but now used for preparing the pap for Mohammed's slaves, was a most serviceable utensil for the purpose. From about 70 lbs. of the meat, which was very tender, I obtained the unusually large proportion of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of extract of excellent quality and of the consistency of firm honey, the whole produce being perfectly free from any glutinous matter. The product was altogether superior to what I had obtained from the Monbuttoo goats, not only being larger in quantity, but infinitely more palatable, thus demonstrating that the flesh of the leucotis justified the reputation for flavour with which it was generally credited. I had an opportunity subsequently of comparing it with what I received amongst my fresh stores from Khartoom, and am satisfied that it was in no way inferior to that from Fray Bentos. Only those who like myself have existed for months together upon an inadequate and monotonous diet, or those who on long desert journeys have been limited to farinaceous food, can estimate the strengthening effect produced by ever so small an addition of this preparation to other food which is not of itself sustaining. Extract of meat thus is not the mere seasoning which many consider it; not simply does it give a relish, and draw out nutritious properties from indifferent food, but it is in itself a nutritious substance of the highest rank.

The process of boiling the meat is very long; while it was being completed next morning I had time to explore the magnificent vegetation of the adjacent hill. The wild vine (*Vitis Schimperi*) was loaded with its ripe clusters and

afforded me a refreshment to which I had been long unaccustomed. These grapes were less juicy than those that grow upon the vine-clad hills of Europe, and they left a somewhat harsh sensation upon the palate; but altogether, and especially in colour, they reminded me of our own growth. Towards the south-east I had a view of the hills of Babunga, about ten miles off on the frontier of the Babuckur territory.

All the huts in Bendo's mbanga had been lately rebuilt in a style that displayed considerable taste, the tops of the straw-roofs being so much decorated that they looked like various specimens of ornamental basket-work. We were able to procure a good stock of maize, which made a welcome change from the uniformly bad bread which we had been eating previously for so long. Bendo himself was quite a character; his singularities amused me; he was a kind of fine gentleman, extremely particular about his *toilette*, and would never allow himself to be seen unless he had been carefully painted and adorned with his high-plumed hat.

I did some botanising on the hill of Gumango and found it full of interest. We next crossed the Rye, and proceeded to the adjacent villages of Gumba. Our camp was scarcely pitched there when a message was received from Mohammed instructing us to wait for him. On returning to his Seriba he had found that all the soldiers for whose fate he had been concerned, and whom he was hurrying off to rescue, had already arrived there safe and sound, having succeeded in breaking through the enemy and in carrying off their wounded. He was now returning to us with his full force. Pending his arrival we remained in Gumba's villages for the two succeeding days.

He came back at the appointed time, and the recovery of the parted friends caused great joy and excitement in the caravan; innumerable were the questions asked, and no accumulation of answers seemed to allay the curiosity.

My own attention was very much engaged by the accounts given by Badry, the captain who had been appointed to the command of the corps in the place of Ahmed ; I knew that his word was to be relied on, and his information was of great value to me as throwing light upon the geography of the country about the lower portions of rivers, some of which I had crossed only in their upper course and sometimes quite close to their fountain-heads.

I heard many details of the conflict between Mohammed's party and the Niam-niam, the leading incidents of which I will now proceed briefly to relate.

It was while they were crossing one of the brooks overhung with the dense forests which now for so long I have designated as galleries that the fatal attack took place ; the consternation of the defenceless bearers, and consequently the confusion of the whole party, would seem to have been very terrible. The first discharge of Niam-niam lances had strewn the ground with dead and wounded, the column of the unfortunate bearers furnishing the larger proportion of the victims. Previous to the attack not a native had been seen. Nothing could be more crafty than their ambush. Some of them had taken up their position behind the larger trees ; some had concealed themselves in the middle of the bushes ; whilst others, in order to get an aim from above, had ensconced themselves high up, contriving to lie full length upon the overhanging boughs where the network of creepers concealed them from the keenest vision. Badry's recital brought vividly to my mind the battles with the Indians in the primeval forests of America, where similar stratagems have been continually resorted to.

The soldiers kept up their fire with energetic vigour ; they are accustomed to carry a number of cartridges arranged like a girdle right round their waist, and having their ammunition thus conveniently at hand they kept up their discharges unintermittingly until they had collected their

wounded; but the bodies of those who had been actually killed all fell into the hands of the assailants and were carried off without delay, all attempts at recovering them being utterly unavailing, because the irregularity of the ground prevented any organised plan of attack.

The bearers, meanwhile, had flung away their heavy loads, and in wild flight had retreated to an adjacent hill that rose above the steppe; here they were in a short time joined by the Nubians, who sought the eminence as commanding a view whence they might survey their position and concert measures for their future protection. Most of the deserted ivory, of course, had become the prey of the foe, but some of the Nubians had taken the precaution of burying the burdens in a swamp within the gallery, under the hope that they might recover it in the following year. Thus deprived of their proper occupation, the bearers were at liberty to carry the wounded, and a treaty was concluded with the enemy so that the party ventured to quit their quarters. The natives, however, were utterly treacherous; they were bent upon the annihilation of the intruders, and so, reinforced from the neighbouring district, they made a fresh and savage attack. In consequence of this the Nubians were compelled to come to a stand in the open plain, and lost no time in collecting whatever faggots they could get to make an abattis.

Behind this abattis they had to hold out for three entire days. The excited Niam-niam persevered in harassing them with unwearied assaults; and as three independent chieftains had summoned their entire forces for the attack, the combined action was unusually formidable; not until the store of lances and arrows was all used up were the furious sallies brought to an end and the Nubians permitted to go upon their way. The enemy, it was said, displayed such unabated energy that when all their ordinary lances had been spent they procured a supply of pointed sticks, which

they proceeded to hurl with all their might against the Nubian band; it was, moreover, asserted that the quantity of shields and lances was so large that the besieged used no other fuel for their camp-fires during the entire period of their detention. Besides the weapons that were burnt, the negroes attached to the caravan brought away a considerable number of lance-heads, which they had tied up in bundles of nearly a hundred and designed for trophies to decorate their own huts.

Having thus spoken of the disasters of war that befell Aboo Sammat's company, I will proceed to give a short outline of the route which they took, and which lay to the west and south-west of the districts through which I had myself travelled. It may be remembered that the corps had been detached from our caravan at Rikkete's village on the Atazilly. It started off in a W.S.W. direction, which it followed during the greater part of the journey. A march of six leagues brought the men, in the first place, to the village of Garia, one of Wando's brothers, who, like most of the sons of the wealthy Bazimbey, had after his father's death, without recognising the hereditary claims of his elder brother, set himself up as an independent prince in his own district. From this locality it was described as "a good day's march" of six leagues to the residence of Malingde or Malindo. This prince was the aforesaid eldest son of Bazimbey, and had consequently a more extensive territory than any of his brothers, with whom he was at that time on quite friendly terms.

A morning's march of about four leagues brought the party onwards to one of the other brothers, named Moffi, who held office as a behnky in a district under the jurisdiction of Malingde; and between two and three leagues to the west again they found another behnky, also Malingde's brother, called Bazia. Beyond this place was a wide tract of wilderness separating Malingde's territory from that of

Indimma. Shortly after reaching Bazia's residence they had to cross a river, which they said was as large as the Rohl at Awoory, and joined the Mbrwole on its right-hand side: three other smaller streams flowed through this wilderness, all of them affluents of the Mbrwole. As it took them four days and a half to travel from Bazia to the residence of Indimma, the distance may probably be estimated at between twenty and thirty leagues.

Indimma was a son of Keefa, and one of the most influential Niam-niam princes of his time. He had taken up his abode on the summit of a lofty and isolated mass of granite or gneiss, which, according to some accounts, was as high as the hills near Awoory (relatively 300 feet); or, according to others, it stood even higher than the Wohba mountain near Deraggo (relatively 500 feet).

At the top of this eminence was an extensive plateau, laid out in cultivated tracts; in the centre, like a small town, stood the residence of the king, embracing, as my informants unanimously declared, more than a thousand houses.

The mountain must extend several miles, both in length and breadth, for the tedious ascent took many windings, and compelled the caravan to make repeated halts. At no great distance to the south was another smaller hill and looking towards the west they had a view of numerous lofty ranges, amongst which was that of the Gangara mountains.

The population of Indimma's territory is a mixed race, consisting partly of true Zandey-Niam-niam and partly of A-Madi, a tribe nearly related to the A-Banga, and corresponding in general features with the Monbuttoo.

After leaving Indimma, the caravan commenced the four days' march which would carry them on to Kanna, who bore the surname of Bendy, the most powerful of all the reigning sons of Keefa. In the middle of the first day they had to cross a large river, which the travellers identified with

Wando's river, the Mbrwole, and compared for magnitude with the Blue Nile at Khartoom; they all persisted in saying that it was not the river that they had to cross in canoes on their way to Munza, and therefore not the Welle. They had still to march on for three days before reaching Kanna, so that there was no doubt that the entire distance between him and Indimma could not be much under thirty leagues. I asked one of Kanna's Niam-niam, who had attached himself to the party on their wanderings, how far it was from Kanna's to Munza's residence, and he replied that, marching at the Niam-niam rate of eight or ten hours a day, the journey would occupy about five days; the direction, he added, was E.S.E. and S.E.; and his entire statement coincided very much with what Abderahman Aboo Guroon had told me when he affirmed that the journey with his heavily-laden caravan had required fifteen days to accomplish; this was the same length of time that it had taken us to travel a distance which I imagine is nearly the same, viz., that from the Nabambisso to Munza's dwelling.

From all I could gather, I should conclude that the arrangements and habits of Kanna's court were very similar to those of the Monbuttoo sovereigns: like them he had his great palatial halls, where he celebrated the national festivals with dancing and music, and where the nobles were assembled for councils of state.

About four leagues, or half a day's march, from Kanna the detachment had come to the residence of Bakinge, the king's brother, who had a limited district specially assigned to him. Just before reaching this spot, the caravan had been conveyed across "the great river" that flows from the land of the Monbuttoo. The river so distinguished was undoubtedly the Welle. The Khartoomers described it as being as wide as the White Nile at its mouth; and the Niam-niam interpreter, who accompanied them, in reply to my direct inquiry as to the proper name of the great river of Kanna,

informed me that it was called the Welle or Bee-Welle,* thus establishing, by a fresh confirmation, its identity with the river of Munza. I was told that in this district it makes a semicircular bend. Close to the spot where the caravan crossed it, was the residence of the king's brother and subchieftain named Mbittima, and at a short distance beyond stood the abode of Zibba, Kanna's son, who was governor of an independent district. Before they passed to the other side of the river, Aboo Sammat's company had also visited the settlement of another brother of Kanna, named Gendwa, which was about two days' journey to the north-west of the king's dominions.

Having thus related the main particulars of the route of the detached party during their absence, I will return to the narrative of our own proceedings.

Our old friend the "minnesinger" paid us another visit in our camp, and entertained us once again with the droll elaboration of his poetic faculty; as the theme on this occasion upon which to exercise his epic muse, he chose the heroic deeds of Mohammed, which he chanted out with characteristic energy.

As I was quite aware that in a few days more I should have taken my leave, perhaps for ever, of the Niam-niam lands, I was particularly anxious to secure a dog of the unique race belonging to the country, that I might exhibit it as a novelty on my return to Europe. For a couple of copper rings I made purchase of a specimen of the breed, which was quite satisfactory, as the creature was not only very intelligent, but attached itself to me in a very few days. My hope, however, of introducing the breed into Europe was doomed to be frustrated; by dint of watchfulness, and at the cost of no little inconvenience, I succeeded in conveying

* "Bee," like "ba," in many of the dialects of Central Africa, means "river." It was an appellation that I was surprised to find in use here, and was a confirmation of the supposed connection of these lands with Baghirmy.

the animal safely as far as Alexandria; but while I was staying there, it leapt from the hotel window, two storeys high, down into the street, and was killed on the spot. Whoever has experienced the bother of dragging a dog across the desert on the back of a camel, or of rescuing it times out of number from being drowned during the passage of a Nile-boat, will readily sympathise with the annoyance I felt at the waste of all my pains.

As our train proceeded along the hilly region between Gumba and Nganye, it was easy to make the observation that there was no appreciable difference in its magnitude compared with what it had been when we traversed the same district more than four months previously. A considerable number of the wounded were still carried on litters, and formed a new feature in the procession. One poor fellow had had the entire sole of his foot literally peeled off by a lance. Ali, the leader of Ghattas's company, had also two severe wounds, one on the neck, the other on the thigh; but although both of them were still open, the sturdy negro made light of his trouble, marched on merrily enough, chattering to his companions every now and then according to the current phraseology of the Nubians, enforcing his assertions by the ejaculation, "Wollahi! wollahi!" (by Allah! by Allah!) These people are far greater heroes in enduring pain than would be expected from their pusillanimity in battle.

With Nganye the Nubians spent a day of riot and revelry in honour of the African Gambrinus. The chieftain had already prepared for their entertainment, and had sent to Mohammed's hut an enormous vase of beer, the vessel being a fine specimen of native pottery, a masterpiece in its way, and so heavy when it was full that it required two men to lift it. I spent the day in a hunting excursion. I started towards the west, and succeeded in killing two small antelopes and in bagging a large number of guinea-fowl that,

in a liberal mood, I distributed amongst my companions; the chieftain himself, when he visited me on the following day, enjoyed a meal off the tender flesh of the birds, which during the rainy season is particularly rich and savoury.

During my stay with Nganye, I had incidentally a further demonstration of what is the limited measure of authority really possessed by the Niam-niam princes. I had discarded, as I have said, the use of my tent: in return for its torn covering, which, with the lining, would have furnished material for more than a hundred aprons, Nganye had covenanted to supply me with twenty baskets of eleusine corn, which would be required by my people during their coming march across the desert; but in spite of the number of his wives and slaves, who I should have imagined would very soon have got together without difficulty whatever he directed, he was only able to furnish me with half the stipulated quantity. This meagre species of grain was all the corn-provision that could be obtained, and very thankful we were that we could get even that.

Before leaving his Seriba, Mohammed had sent a message to Nganye to warn him of the advance of the caravan, so that he might have sufficient time for the preparation of the bridge by which it could cross the Tondy. This work was executed without delay. A suspension bridge of a very curious and original construction had been thrown across the rushing waters. Some of the strongest trees on each bank had been chosen for supports, and the bridge consisted simply of strong ropes attached to them with some planks or poles laid upon as cross-bars. This aerial pathway, as might be expected, oscillated like a swing; but dangerous as it was, it permitted a passage by carefully crawling from one cross-piece to the next.

The march from Nganye's residence to the river led through the marvellous grass-thickets which I have already described. The grass was now shooting up afresh in all its

wild luxuriance. The season for the great elephant-hunts was at an end, and Mohammed was well satisfied with the quantity of ivory his friend had secured. He told me that Nganye, although he ruled over a district that was smaller in extent (though it contained nearly as many hunting-grounds as that of Munza), had furnished him with a much larger supply of ivory than the powerful Monbuttoo king.

It was near the river, in some huts newly-built in Peneeo's district, that we passed our last night in the Niam-niam country. A wide tract of wilderness had been lately rooted up in order to acquire fresh arable land against the time when the soil already in cultivation should be exhausted. In these places it is wonderful to see how the masses of shrubs that have been oppressed by the exuberant growth of the trees, sprout out with renewed vigour: free, as it were, from a long restraint, and reanimated by an open sky, these step-children of the sylvan flora seem to overwhelm the wanderer with their beauteous bounty.

On the 24th of June we reached the Tondy and its hanging bridge. To convey the baggage across this tottering erection was the work of nearly an entire day. The place of our present transit was four miles to the east of the spot at which we had crossed on our outward journey; it had been chosen higher up the river for several reasons, not only because the stream was narrower and the banks were higher, but principally because the trees were of a larger, more substantial growth, better adapted for the purpose of being converted into piers for the suspended ropes which formed the bridge. The river was here sixty feet wide, but near the banks it was so full of fallen trees and bushes, of which the boughs projected as though growing in the water, that the width of the stream was practically diminished one-half. The velocity of the current was about 115 feet a minute, the depth nowhere being less than 10 feet.

The materials of the suspension-bridge consisted exclu-



sively of branches of the wild vine intertwined with thick elastic ropes of unusual strength. The French traveller d'Abbadie noticed a similar stratagem for crossing rivers on his tour to Enarea, and bridges improvised very much in the same manner are constructed from creeping plants in South America. In order to get the ropes raised to a sufficient height, a regular scaffolding of fallen stems has to be erected on either side of the river, by means of which the festoons of cords are raised to a proper altitude. The clambering from cross-piece to cross-piece upon this unstable structure, poised in mid-air, seemed to require little less than the agility of an orang-outang; while the very consciousness of the insecurity of the support was enough to make the passenger lose his composure, even though he were free from giddiness and already an adept in the gymnastic art.

CHAPTER XIX.

Division of the caravan. Trip to the east. African elk. Bamboo-forests. Seriba Mbomo on the Lehasy. Abundance of corn. Route between Kuddoo and Mbomo. Maize-culture. Harness-bushbock. Leopard carried in triumph. Leopards and panthers. The Babuckur. Lips of the Babuckur women. Surprised by buffaloes. Accident in crossing the Lehasy. Tracts of wilderness. Buffaloes in the bush. The Mashirr hills. Tamarinds again. Wild dates. Tikkitikki and the cows. The Viceroy's scheme. Hunger on the march. Passage of the Tondy. Suggestion for a ferry. Prosperity of Ghattas's establishments. Arrival of expected stores. A dream realised. Trip to Kurkur. Hyæna dogs. Dislike of the Nubians to pure water. Two soldiers killed by Dinka. Attempt to rear an elephant. My menagerie. Accident from an arrow. Cattle plagues. Meteorology. Trip to the Dyoor. Gyabir's delusion. Bad news of Mohammed. Preparations for a second Niam-niam journey.

THE day was far advanced when, after crossing the Tondy, we turned towards the left, and quitted the thickets in order that we might find an open grass plot sufficiently extensive to accommodate our caravan. The separate detachments were all gathered together, and then divided into two parties, as before returning to Sabby Mohammed had resolved to make an excursion eastwards as far as the borders of his Mittoo territory, so that he might fetch away what ivory he had in store there. The greater part of the bearers and soldiers were sent on direct to Sabby, and I arranged for my own bearers, under the conduct of my servant Osman Aboo Bekr, to accompany them, whilst for myself I reserved just as much baggage as was necessary, and joined the party that was proceeding to the east. It chanced that Ghattas's corps was taking the same route, and as it led through

districts which were well supplied with corn, we all marched in company.

After subduing the Mittoo who were resident close to Nganye's territory, Mohammed Aboo Sammat, in the previous February, had founded a Seriba on the Upper Lehssy, at no great distance from the villages of Uringama, one of Nganye's behnkys. On account of its singular fertility the district was a very favourite station for the various Rohl-companies on their way to and from the Niam-niam lands, and the sagacious Kenoosian, well aware of the advantages afforded by their frequent visits, and knowing, moreover, how numerous elephants were in the surrounding regions, had lost no time in making a settlement in the locality. The name of the local overseer of the Mittoo people was Mbomo. As the owners of the land were mutually satisfied with each other and on the best of terms, the soldiers of the Seriba lived on the most amicable footing with the neighbouring Niam-niam. The Seriba Mbomo was about twenty-one miles to the E.S.E. of the spot where we crossed the Tondy, the road by which we travelled lying almost in a straight line in that direction.

Soon after starting, just as we re-entered the obscurity of the forest, the men in the van of the procession made signs that there was something stirring amongst the bushes. We came to a halt, and hurrying to the front as stealthily as I could, I made out the forms of some light-coloured animals that were lurking in the shadows of the underwood. They turned out to be five splendid elands. They appeared not to have noticed our approach, and grazed on, as peacefully as oxen, under a large tree just in front of us. Simultaneously one of the blacks and myself fired at the foremost buck that chanced to be standing full broadside in our face. The startled animals made a bound, and put their running powers to the test, their short weak legs carrying their ponderous bodies at full gallop across our path. All at once a crashing

noise and a heavy fall; the wounded victim was ours: a good supper was provided for our caravan.

This antelope (*A. oreas*) is the largest and tallest of all the African species, occasionally measuring six feet high at the withers; it appears to be common to the entire continent, and perhaps does not fail in any equatorial region whatever. It is probable that the imposing animal owes its name of "eland" to the imagination of some well-read Boër, to whom it appeared like the mythical creature of his fables and heroic songs; for only as such could the elk have been known to the worthy Dutch colonists. But however little, as far as regards either the colour of its coat or the shape of its horns, the oreas may have in common with the elk, still I must confess that by its size it could not do otherwise than remind me of the stately game of my Livonian home; and the shaggy hair hanging in full crop from the neck, the bushy bristles on the forehead, and above all the thick black mane upon the withers, all combined to increase the resemblance. Far more striking, however, is the analogy of this animal with the zebu-races of Africa, which exhibit many points that are common to the whole antelope type. The short legs, the elevated round body, the long hanging dewlap, the hump-shaped withers, and the light bay colour of the skin are characteristics of this race that justify a comparison of the eland with them far more than with the elk.

In external appearance this African elk exhibits varieties as great as the hartebeest and other common species of antelopes, and on this account it seems to claim some detailed notice. In zoological gardens it is very rare to find two individual examples exactly alike, and the greatest diversity is observable in the shape of the horns; as instances of this, I may refer to the representation here introduced of two pairs of horns which I have selected from my collection, and which may be taken as examples of the two most extreme forms that came under my notice. They

are about a yard in length, the pair that is more divergent making only one spiral turn, while the other makes a turn



Horns of Central African Eland.

and a half. All the elands that I saw had extremely short sleek hair of a bright yellow tan colour verging on the flanks to a light bay; the mane was black and erect, being about three inches long. In every district through which I travelled I observed their skin to be always marked in well-defined stripes, which are not, as some travellers have supposed, to be taken as indications of the youth of the animal: I have seen full grown specimens that were marked on each side of the body with no less than fifteen parallel stripes, about as wide as one's finger, of a pure white running from the black line of the back transversely down to the middle of the belly, which is often marked with a large black

spot. The flesh of the eland ranks amongst the better kinds of antelope-meat, and as quite as palatable as that of the hartebeest.

We encamped about a league from our suspension-bridge, in the midst of a splendid wilderness, where, in spite of the torrents of rain, I passed a night of entire comfort in my warm nest of grass. A little way to the north of our encampment there was a small gneiss hill called Manga. Before halting for the night we had crossed two brooks, which with a supply of water alike copious and rapid hastened on to join the river at no great distance away; the first of these, the Mokungudduly, rippled along over smooth blocks of gneiss, and was bordered by flower-bespangled meadows that, stretching onwards in a forest glade, were watered besides by countless springs.

The march of eight leagues that lay before us would pass through an unbroken forest, and required us to make an early start upon the following morning; accordingly when we set out we found the whole wood veiled in mist and the ground yet reeking with the heavy dew. The forest flora continually tempted me to deviate to either side of the pathway. My interest was especially attracted by the splendid *Encephalartus*, which seemed abundant throughout the district. Amongst other new types of plants which met my notice was the *Tithymalus*, one of the cabbage-like euphorbiæ, the first that I had seen throughout the entire region. A large variety of conspicuous shrubs, many of them covered with fine blossoms, gave the forest almost the aspect of an artificial park; one of the most frequent of these (worthy indeed to be designated as a tree) was the *Parinarium polyantherum*, remarkable alike for its great trusses of white blossoms and for its polished leaves, which are thick and yet brittle.

No less than eight running streams had to be crossed during this march: the three first joined the Tondy, the

rest being tributary to the Lehssy. The third brook was called the Baziah, the fifth the Ulidyatibba; succeeding this, and enclosed by walls of gneiss, came the Lehssindah.

About a league to the right of our path, and to the south of the place where we forded the Lehssindah, rose several gneiss hills, of which the two highest peaks were called Ndimoh and Bondoh. Our route had hitherto been quite level, and apparently at a considerable height above the valley of the Tondy; but it now began to descend for a couple of leagues to the Morokoh. This wide and rapid stream flowed through a tray-like valley surrounded by open grass-plains that sloped downwards on either side to the meanderings of the water. In front of us, to the east, the whole country had a gentle but regular elevation, for looking over the right bank of the Lehssy we could make out the locality in which the union would have to be sought of the chain of the Zilēi mountains in Mondoo with those that extend between the Tondy and the Roah.

The scenery of the steep declivity towards the south-west which we now reached assumed a character very different to the park-like landscape through which we had been passing. For many miles the eye rested upon treeless steppes broken by bamboo jungles that seemed almost impenetrable, standing in detached groups, their dark olive-green contrasting admirably with the bright hue of the grass, and giving a novelty to the general aspect. Immediately beyond the Morokoh our path began to rise, and led us into the semi-obscurity of one of these jungles.

A short time before reaching it, we had left on our right a series of hamlets inhabited by the Niam-niam belonging to Dippodo's district: a league further on lay the villages of Uringama, on the extreme eastern frontier of Nganye's territory, the Lehssy forming the boundary between the Niam-niam and the Mittoo; and a few more leagues still in

the same direction would have brought us to the north-eastern limits of the Babuckur.

We reached the Lehssy shortly before sunset. The Seriba was built close upon the opposite bank, but it was so enclosed by the tall bamboos that towered high above the palisade that it was completely hidden from our view. The actual source of the Lehssy was at no great distance; the river here was about fifteen feet wide, and four feet deep, and flowed in a N.N.W. direction: the water was as clear as crystal, a peculiarity that appertains to all streams that are enclosed by bamboos, which delight in a soil that is intersected by springs. The stems of the bamboos rose to the height of forty feet; slender and graceful they bent themselves into an arch which stretched far across the stream; and as hardly anywhere could a more inviting spot be found for a siesta, so hardly anywhere could water be met with more tempting for a bath than that which flowed limpidly over its gravel bed.

On my arrival at the Seriba, I soon became convinced that I was in a land where corn was abundant; the very liberality of the messes of sorghum-kissere that were served up to my people was an ample proof that there was no scarcity here. In times gone by I had myself had an utter disdain for this food of the Soudan, but now, after so long a deprivation, I relished it heartily, and thought it equal to the most delicate of rolls. It was no doubt heavy and indigestible enough; still I could make a good meal of it; only on rare occasions during the Niam-niam journey had I tasted any sorghum at all, and when I had, it had been doled out in infinitesimal quantities, but with the fresh enjoyment of this luxury now, and with the returning opportunity of getting some real roast mutton, our previous privations were soon forgotten.

The Seriba Mbomo was ten leagues to the south of Kuddoo, on the Roah. Mohammed. with a thoughtful con-

sideration of my tastes, had taken means to enable me to fill up some missing links in the chain of our route. During his march in February he had made one of his men who could write take down all the information he could get from the Mittoo guides; and from the same authority I obtained verbal confirmation of the reports which I had previously gathered, so that I was able to map out the entire district with what I believe is tolerable accuracy.

In the sketch of the route there were enumerated as many as twelve brooks that had to be crossed in the interval between Kuddoo and Mbomo, all supplied more or less copiously with water, even in the dry winter season. Reckoning from north to south, the series came in the following order: the Tee, the Burri, the Malikoo, the Mari-kohli, the Mangawa, and the Wary; then came the watershed between the Lehssy and the Roah, marked by the Ghery-hills, which I afterwards visited; then followed six more brooks, the Kooluma, the Magbogba, the Makaï, the Patioh, the Manyinyee, and the Malooka. Although all these streams have their origin quite close to the left bank of the Roah, yet they take a very devious course before they actually join it; the last five, indeed, do not directly meet the river, but join another stream to the west of the route called the Dongodduloo, which unites itself with the Tee or Tay; the brook that flows past Ngoly's village, and which is known to the west of Sabby as the Koddoh, being an affluent of the Roah.

On the watershed, bamboo-jungles extend over an area of many square miles. The species which is thus found in such immense masses is the same which is so prolific in the lower terraces of the Abyssinian highlands. In the manner of their growth these bamboos remind me of an asparagus-bed in the summer-time, hundreds of sprouts start up from a single root, and in graceful curves droop over towards the ground. The habit of the plant is altogether similar to

the Indian bamboo, which has lately been successfully introduced into the pleasure-gardens of Cairo. The Abyssinian species does not grow so thick in the stem as the Indian, but it attains as great a height, often rising to forty or fifty feet.

The well-tilled soil of Mbomo's district reminded me very much of the country about Kuraggera; the land appeared well populated and covered with extensive fields of maize and sorghum. The extent to which maize was cultivated was quite surprising; whole acres were planted with it, and I obtained a large supply of fresh ears. I had these all dried and ground, and thus provided myself with a considerable quantity of flour, enough to meet the requirements of several weeks to come. The maize is here liable to the same drawback as it is elsewhere. It is very easily spoiled. This happens from two causes; it has a tendency to turn mouldy, and it is very subject to the gnawings of worms; the meal also ferments sooner than any other species of grain. The means adopted by the natives to keep it during the winter is simply to tie the ears in great sheaves and to hang them up on some detached trees, where they can have plenty of air, and yet be out of the reach of the noxious vermin.

One of the best productions of the country is the bean (*Phaseolus lunatus*), the same that is so much cultivated by the Mittoo; it is one of the most palatable species with which I am acquainted; its pods, that are short, broad, and crescent-shaped, never contain more than two large beans.

Although the settlement had been so recently established, Mohammed was very pleased with the store of ivory that had been secured.

For three whole days I rambled about on the banks of the Lehassy, meeting with excellent sport. Amongst other things, I killed my first bushbock, an animal of which the yellowish-tan skin is marked with white stripes, the lines so

arranged as if they were a regular harness. There is always to be observed some difference or other between each of these creatures and all its fellows; they are never precisely alike; either there will be some spot or speck, or stripe, which is peculiar to each, and distinguishes it from all the rest. The specimens of the bush-buck that I saw were always solitary; and it would seem to be more timid than any other species of antelope. The singular marking of its skin adapted it to catch the eye, but it was rarely visible for more than a moment; its nervous sensibility made it keen to catch the slightest sound; the lightest rustling would make it bound away into the woods. I have stood breathlessly waiting with cocked rifle, but there is no time to take a proper aim; and the shot that took effect I own was directed rather by chance than skill.

The bamboo-thickets are likewise a favourite resort of wart-hogs, which there find abundant food in the tender young sprouts in which they delight. Numbers of birds, too, attracted by the grain that is formed in the round and bushy spikes of the bamboo, haunt the scene, and many varieties of sparrows (*Passeres*) build and breed in this solitude, which is well-nigh as undisturbed as any upon the face of creation.

The appearance of a herd of large eland antelopes excited the Niam-niam of the neighbourhood to organise a regular *battue*, during the prosecution of which they met with a bit of good fortune that did not often occur. They succeeded in killing a leopard, an event that was deemed so great a triumph that old and young conspired to do honour to the occasion. The first intimation that we had of anything unusual having transpired was given by the war-trumpets, the notes of which were heard in the direction of Uringama's villages; our first impression was that the Niam-niam, who were charged by the keen Kenosian with the protection of his frontier, had been successfully repulsing some assault on

the part of the Babuckur; but very soon the report was circulated that a noble present was being conveyed to Mohammed, and, true enough, ere long there approached a formal procession bearing on a litter of leaves the blood-stained carcase of the leopard. The offering was duly laid at Mohammed's feet as a tribute, betokening the respect and friendship of the behnky. Throughout the whole of Central Africa the skin of the leopard is deemed a suitable adornment for persons of princely rank, and nowhere is it more readily admitted amongst the insignia of royalty than with the Niam-niam.

The animal that was now brought in was more than a yard in length. It had been killed in a singular way. Having encroached stealthily upon the position of the hartebeests, and not suspecting the proximity of the hunters, it had suddenly found itself beset by a body of men, and by a prodigious bound endeavoured to leap over the circle of snares that had been set. Just, however, as the leopard was effecting an escape it was struck by a couple of lances with such violence that the points darned themselves into the flesh, and left the stems protruding. Thus impeded, the wounded creature became entangled in the bushes and, overpowered by the number of missiles hurled against it, succumbed to its destiny.

All the leopard skins that I saw in this part of Africa belonged to animals of the thick-set species, which is distinguished by large complicated spots, each spot being itself an assemblage of smaller spots, which run, generally in about five rows, along the entire body. By some naturalists this species is designated as the panther, in contradistinction to the true leopard, which is said to have a more slender body covered with more numerous rows of smaller spots. This, however, is an error; in spite of the many varieties of form and the gradations in the markings of the skin, it appears certain that but *one* species of leopard exists

throughout Africa, and that in this quarter of the globe, at least, the distinctive terms of *leopard* and *panther* are unnecessary.

On my previous wanderings I had skirted about three-fourths of the frontier of the Babuckur territory. As this territory lay but a short distance to the south-west of Mbomo, being bounded by the Tondy, I was able to obtain from the soldiers of the Seriba some particulars of the country of which I had seen the natives largely represented among the slaves of the various settlements at which I had sojourned.

The Babuckur must either have migrated to their present quarters from the south, or they must be the remnant of a nation that has been constrained to make its way to the north and to the east by the advance of the Niam-niam. It is said that their dialect is found amongst some of the tribes to the south of the Monbuttoo; this is not at all unlikely, as, like those tribes, they have an established system of agriculture and give great attention to the breeding of goats. Limited to an area of not more than 350 square miles, the eastern portion of this people is very much exposed to the raids of the Khartoomer traders and to the depredations of the Niam-niam chieftains, who for years have considered their land as a sort of outlying storehouse, from which they could at pleasure replenish their stock of corn and cattle. By reason of the perpetual persecutions to which they have been subject, their population has gradually become more and more compressed, and their very crowded condition itself probably accounts for the vigorous intensity with which they now ward off any acts of hostility; they are equally warlike and resolute; they will fight till they have shed their last drop of blood; and as cannibalism is commonly reported to be practised among them, their assailants are generally content to carry off whatever plunder is to be secured, as hastily as possible, without waiting to pursue

or trying to subjugate them. Their eastern neighbours, the Loobah, though themselves harassed by the oppressors from the north, are continually at war with the Babuckur.

The other portion of the Babuckur has withdrawn to the frontiers of the Bongo and Niam-niam that lie between the Sway and the Tondy, about sixty miles to the north-west of the portion to which I have been referring; the complete identity of the race, thus severed only in situation, is verified not only by the one term "Babuckur" being applied indiscriminately to the two sections, but still more by the complete similarity of the dialects, as I afterwards proved by comparing the vocabularies that I compiled. The Bongo call the western division of the Babuckur "Mundo."*

The Babuckur are a tropical negro race. Their complexion is very dark. As slaves they are very useful, being of a docile and enduring temperament, handy in the house, and expert at almost any ordinary work. They are short in stature, and have a vacant, not to say a repulsive, expression. The women, when they have once passed their youth are, as a rule, the very incarnation of ugliness, for besides having extremely irregular features, they mutilate their faces in a most frightful way. All married women† pierce the rims of their ears and both their lips, and insert bits of grass-stalk about an inch long in the holes, some of them having as many as twenty of these grass-slips about their mouth and ears. The sides of the nostrils are treated in the same way as amongst the women of the Bongo, as I noticed in its proper place.

As Mohammed was anxious to inspect his Mittoo Seribas again before returning to his chief settlement, I did not wait for him, but, accompanied by a small retinue, I started off

* This is the Mundo of Petherick.

† The portrait of a Babuckur woman is given in the subsequent chapter on the slave-trade.

on the 29th of June, taking the nearest route to Sabby. For the first four miles we followed the same path by which we had come to Mbomo, and although the rain fell incessantly, the bamboo-forest was so unbroken that it afforded us an effectual shelter, and we reached the descent to the Morokoh with dry skins. After crossing the brook we turned off in a north-westerly direction, at an acute angle to our previous path.

An immense tract of forest, utterly barren and uninhabited, was now before us. The nearest cultivated spot would be the villages of the Bongo, near Ngoly, which could not be less than forty miles away, and certainly could not be reached within three days. After crossing four little meadow-waters, and fording the Lehssindah where it flowed between its gneiss banks, we encamped for the night about a league further on, near another of these meadow-waters, which are very numerous, and which, spreading themselves out in open glades, sometimes 500 paces wide, break the monotony of the wooded scene.

The whole region was enlivened by herds of hartebeests, and choosing my position at the head of the procession, I was ever on the *qui vive* to pursue them. My exertions in this way made the distance that I actually travelled three times as much as it need have been; but I had no other reward for my pains than the amusement I derived from the grotesque movements of the agile creatures.

After I had comfortably settled myself for the night in my grass nest, a circumstance occurred of a kind which more than once had happened to us before. I was roused by a dull heavy sound that seemed to shake the ground like an approaching earthquake. Our camp was tolerably extensive, for, besides my own retinue, a considerable number of Mohammed's bearers, conveying a large quantity of his ivory, had been sent in our party; but large as our numbers were, the whole camp was thrown into commotion, and shouts and

gun-shots were heard from every quarter. The explanation of the uproar was that an enormous herd of buffaloes in their nightly wanderings had come scampering down upon our position, and exposed us to the manifest risk of being trampled to death.

Early on the second morning we reached the banks of the Lehssy. The deep river-bed was now quite full, the stream being forty feet wide and flowing in a westerly direction at the rate of sixty feet a minute. The bearers performed the passage by the ordinary manœuvre of bridging over the water. For my own part I thought to adopt a scheme which would give some variety to the monotony of these proceedings, and became the victim of a little episode of by no means an agreeable nature. There would be a difficulty, I felt, in wearing my boots to cross the tangled branches of which the extemporised bridges are formed; they would permit no sure hold to the feet, and to walk over barefooted would not have been a prudent experiment, as I might become footsore and prevented from marching; I therefore abandoned all idea of clambering over, but undressed myself and proceeded to swim across the flood. When I was just within a few strokes of the opposite shore, all at once I experienced a painful shock that throbbed through every limb; I had come into contact with one of the prickly mimosa-bushes, which I have already described as frequently hedging in the various streams. The river-bed being now full to its entire capacity, the water had completely risen above the dangerous shrubs, so that they had quite escaped my notice. I knew the nature of these thorny barriers by experience, and when I mention that I never found the stoutest boots able to withstand the penetrating power of the spikes, it may be imagined to a degree what agony I now suffered. It was like stranding on a reef of thorns. The utmost refinement of cruelty could hardly devise an instrument of torture much more effectual than

these mimosæ. However, swim I must. With a desperate effort I got myself free from the entanglement of the shrubs, and, bleeding from a hundred lacerations, I contrived to reach the land. I felt as if my whole body had been scarified. But there was no time to lose; so, in spite of the nervous shock, the angry wounds, and the smarting skin, I set out at once in continuation of our march.

We travelled five leagues that day and crossed six separate meadow-waters and glades of the same character as those already mentioned.

After proceeding for a considerable distance over bare red rocks, we were overtaken by a sudden storm of rain, and had to take hasty measures for protecting the baggage. But the interruption did not prevent me from doing a little interesting botanizing during the interval of delay. I found two of the prettiest plants that the land produces here, showing themselves in great abundance: a little orchid (*Habenaria crocea*) with saffron-coloured blossoms, and a sky-blue *Monbretia*, not unlike a squill. In many places the barren rocks were overspread with patches of these plants, that they looked as though a carpet had been laid out upon them, the colours blending into patterns that would not disgrace the flower-beds of our modern gardening.

In connection with the second of our night encampments a circumstance occurred, trifling in itself, but which was a convincing proof that, however deserted and free from human intrusion these forest solitudes might appear, they are nevertheless explored by the natives when they are out upon their hunting excursions. In the bustle of starting in the morning, a pair of boots, which I had hung up to dry within my grass-hut, had been forgotten and left behind. I did not miss them for a few days; but as their loss could not be replaced, I sent some people back, in the hope that they would recover them. It was found that the huts meanwhile had been ransacked by some mysterious stranger, and the

rare treasure had not escaped the keen eye of the hunter; the boots, indeed, were hanging precisely where they had been left; but every nail, and every little brass ring that formed the eyelets for the laces, had been carefully extracted from the leather, and were now probably gleaming in the nose and ears of some swarthy beauty.

Early in the morning of the third day we entered the splendid forest of Humboldtia, through which, only ten miles to the west, we had passed at the commencement of our Niam-niam campaign. After the forest came an open steppe, with a distant view of the hills in front, which we should again have to cross, though more to the east than before. The passage of the Mah being accomplished, the ascent began, and led through a wood, where the foliage was so dense that it was quite impossible to see many steps ahead. At this period I chanced to be nearly in the rear of the procession, when my attention was arrested by an old black slave in the pathway, who kept beckoning me to come to her. I found, on going up to the place where she stood, that she wanted to point out to me a black object that was about ten paces away; at first I took it to be merely a great stem of a tree that could only be indistinctly seen behind the large leaves of the Anonæ; and I was about to make a somewhat closer investigation, when all at once the mass began to move, and a fine pair of horns displayed themselves. In my impetuous surprise I fired mechanically, without an aim. My sudden shot raised a storm that I had little expected. In an instant a herd of twenty buffaloes, snorting and bellowing, with tails erect, came galloping past in mad career. Dizzy with confusion I discharged my double-barrelled rifle amongst the brutes; another moment and I could see nothing more than the massive foliage: the buffaloes had vanished, and I heard no more of them than the distant thunder of their heavy tramp.

The hills before us were called Mashirr; they were a con-

tinuation of the steep declivity of Mbala-Ngeea in the west, to which I have already alluded, extending onwards towards the south-east and forming a portion of the ridge that had been on our right during the whole of our march. On the summit, as far as the eye can reach, there is an extensive plateau, broken by detached groves and handsome trees, and sloping down towards the north, to the depression of the Tee. For the first time, after long missing them, we found some tamarinds, under the ample shade of which we made a short noonday halt, and then started off through some deep defiles that led to arid plains. Before reaching the Tee we counted four little brooks that flowed in an easterly direction to join it; the first of these, to the north of the hills, was the upper course of the Nungolongboh, and was full of water in a deep bed enclosed by an avenue of trees. A ridge of hills ran parallel to our path upon the left, and after we had crossed the second brook we observed a mass of red rock rising to about 300 feet upon our right. Many small herds of hartebeests came in sight. I lamed one of the animals with a rifle-shot, and was grieved to see how cruelly it was afterwards butchered by the Bongo, the poor brute being so unmercifully mangled by their lances that I had no little difficulty in getting a piece of solid flesh large enough to carry off and roast.

So much time was lost in our chase of the antelope that the evening came on whilst we had still some leagues to travel, and we soon found ourselves marching on in complete darkness. I was amongst the stragglers of our party, and we lost our way several times before we were finally collected by the clanging roll of the kettle-drums on the southern outposts of the Bongo. It was quite midnight when, weary with our exertions and drenched by passing through so many swamps, we arrived, after a circuitous route, at the village of Ngoly.

At this place we remained a day to recruit our strength.

In the environs of the village I found the *Encephalartus* (here in its most northerly position), the seeds, as large as hazel-nuts, strewing the ground in all directions.

At this season, too, the fruit of the wild date-palm was ripe, and I collected a large quantity of it, with which I made an unsuccessful attempt to concoct some African palm-wine. The fruit possesses the same pleasant aroma as the common date, but it is only a third of the size, and is very unpalatable, being harsh, dry, and woody.

On the 3rd of July we marched, without a single halt, for nine consecutive hours, until we found ourselves once again in Sabby. The last few leagues were accomplished in a drizzling rain. Large herds of antelopes frequented the district; but it was vexatious to find myself continually foiled in chasing them by the over-eagerness of my own dogs, which I was quite unable to restrain.

Our entry into Sabby made a wonderful impression upon Tikkitikki. He caught sight of a number of cattle quietly grazing before the gate of the Seriba, and, jumping to the conclusion that they must be a herd of wild antelopes that had accidentally strayed there, could not comprehend why no one endeavoured to avail himself of so splendid a chance to secure a prize. Subsequently, when he witnessed the process of milking, his delight knew no bounds; he laughed aloud, and declared that so comical a sight he had never seen before.

This journey had been one of the most pleasant and the most successful that had ever been undertaken in so remote a part of the continent. Its pleasantness was owing to my state of health and to the fine air of the Niam-niam countries; its success was due to the favourable circumstances under which I had travelled. In Europe the general idea of such a journey is that it must be a sort of martyrdom, made up of indescribable fatigue, exertion, and deprivation; but, without hesitation, I can affirm that, to a traveller who can

only maintain his strength and activity, it is far otherwise; though he may find his enterprise laborious, he will not find it wearisome; it will be what a German would describe as *mühsam* rather than *mühselig*. Fatigue and hardships are estimated comparatively, not so much to themselves, as to the ordinary comfort of domestic life. Those who are acquainted with such fatigue as attends our modern warfare, with its transient strain upon the powers of endurance, may probably form a fair idea of the character of my exertions; but to all those who, like myself, have travelled by "Russian posts" my worst trials and wants in Africa would appear mere child's play. In fact, our days' marches were often so short that I became quite impatient. Our Niam-niam campaign from Sabby occupied 150 days, and in that time, apart from a few unimportant deviations, we had only travelled 560 miles in all; according to the calculations as registered in my journal at the time, the whole distance accomplished was about 248 leagues.

After the forced marches, however, that we had just recently been making, I was heartily glad of the five days' rest which I was now enabled to enjoy in Sabby. A large packet of letters was awaiting my arrival, and to read through a correspondence which had been accumulating for a year and a half was an agreeable engagement for the period of unwonted repose. It was now for the first time that I heard of Sir Samuel Baker's adventurous expedition, and now that I got my earliest intimation of the Egyptian Government having undertaken to establish a footing in the Gazelle district. Kurshook Ali, a born Osmanli and one of the chief ivory merchants of Khartoom, who possessed a Seriba there, had been invested by the Governor-General with the title of a Sandjak, and been placed at the head of two companies of Government troops, one company being regular Turks (Bazibazuks), the other composed of negroes (Nizzam). The arrival of these troops had excited a great

amount of consternation through all the Seribas, for, apart from the fact that it too probably seemed to jeopardise the very foundation of the rights of the holders to the territory, it certainly presaged the levying of those taxes and imposts which the presence of Government soldiers always entails. What, in the first place, excited Kurshook Ali's cupidity was to get possession of the famous copper mines of South Darfoor. He was going to appropriate these in the name of the Viceroy, but Ismail Pasha was caught in a trap, and beguiled by the duplicity of a priest belonging to Darfoor, who represented the locality as being his own private property, exhibiting a forged deed of gift, purporting to be made by the late Sultan, to corroborate his claim.

Hellali, for such was the name of the skilful swindler, had for some time been employed as a secretary at the Court of the Sultan Hussein, and, being familiar with the administration of the affairs of Darfoor, turned his knowledge to account in fostering the animosity of that country against Egypt, its far more powerful neighbour. He had not, however, the slightest acquaintance with the property which he claimed as his own, and led the troops, with their Sandjak, by difficult paths to an uncertain fate, in a country that was scarcely known even by name.

In possession of the Viceregal firman, Hellali had the companies of black soldiers under his own orders, while Kurshook Ali had only the Arnauts. The story of how Hellali brought about a bloody conflict not only with the occupiers of the Seribas, but (after the death of the Sandjak, Kurshook Ali, which occurred soon afterwards) with the Turkish soldiers themselves, must be narrated on a later page.

After I had re-arranged and re-packed my collection, and seen that it had been properly enveloped in waterproof cases, I provided myself with a fresh relay of bearers, and, on the 8th of July, proceeded again towards the north. It was

hardly in human nature not to be eager to get the provisions which, having been forwarded from Khartoom, were now delayed beside the sluggish waters of the Gazelle. Mohammed, however, had not yet appeared, but was still making his requisitions of corn in his territories amongst the Mittoo. In consequence of his not returning with the anticipated contributions there was an increased dearth in Sabby, and my poor bearers were becoming absolutely destitute. Their sufferings during their arduous five days' toil were little short of incredible. The Seribas of Shereefee, which were passed upon the way, were as "hard up" for sustenance as Sabby itself; and besides this, the Bongo that were settled thereabouts were all in avowed hostility to my own Bongo, so that no spirit of hospitality was to be expected along our route.

Throughout this portion of our trying journey, the bearers, incredible as it may appear, subsisted solely upon the wild roots which they could grub up; they had positively nothing else to support them, and only digestions such as theirs could have endured the strain. The pressure under which we laboured of accomplishing the journey without loss of time was so urgent that there was not leisure to avail ourselves of any temptation to the chase, and, however much we might feast our eyes, we were under the stern necessity of keeping back our feet from pursuing the elands and waterbucks which had ventured from the wilderness and were grazing peacefully in almost close proximity to our line of march.

It was on the 10th that we reached Shereefee's chief Seriba, but we did not enter it. I had openly declared myself to belong to Mohammed's party, and indeed could not do otherwise than foresee the bitterness of those contentions which so soon afterwards broke out and led to such serious issues.

Most fortunately we were free from rain all the day. The groups of sycamores, which on our former visit had furnished

such a commodious encampment under the shelter of their splendid foliage, invited us once again to take up our quarters beneath them; but we had hardly settled ourselves under their shade before we were surprised by the sudden outbreak of a storm, which continued with much violence. The woody landscape around was pleasant enough, and I was compensated in a way by the beauty of the scenery for the lack of provisions; but I looked forward with eager hope for a period of refreshment when there would be an end to chilly baths and wearing apparel perpetually wet.

The passage over the Doggoroo was not made without considerable trouble, as we had to fell some trees and lay down a lot of brushwood so as to construct one of our improvised bridges. The last night-camp between the Doggoroo and the Tondy was deplorably wretched; our provisions were positively exhausted; all we could do was to send some messengers to the nearest Seriba to insure that we should have a supply of some kind in readiness for us on the following morning. It was also necessary to have extra bearers, as comparatively few of the Bongo of Sabby had any knowledge of the art of swimming.

After arriving at the height, from whence, for some miles round, we could survey the expanse of the submerged lowlands, we had still several hours before we could decipher in the distance the forms of the swimmers bringing the burdens of which we were in such urgent need. My bearers could not control their impatience; greedily they pounced upon the first bags of corn that were brought to land, and without tarrying for the grain to be cooked, they thrust it by handfuls into their mouths. Their strong teeth easily crunched it up, the hard dry corn being as readily devoured by them as if they had been accustomed to it all their lives. Horses, or ruminants of any kind, could not more readily have disposed of a feed of oats.

I had thoroughly to undress myself in order to pass over

the flooded depression, and even upon the banks of the stream I stood knee-deep in water. The passage over the river was tedious, mainly in consequence of the sharp edges of the marsh-grass and the numerous pit-holes in the bottom making any rapid progress very dangerous. No less than two hours had I to dawdle away my time in this cheerless position before the caravan could be brought entirely over. A small raft, constructed of bundles of grass tied together, was used for the purpose of ferrying the baggage across; and, thanks to the excessive care that was used, not a single article failed to be transported in safety.

At this date (July 12, 1870) the Tondy was flowing with a velocity of eighty feet a minute; the depth of the channel, now over-full, proved to be no less than twenty-four feet, and the entire width of the stream, as it reached from the reedy border on one side to that on the other, extended to something more than 120 feet. The river had now risen more than four feet beyond the ordinary limits of its inundation, and our train had repeatedly to make wide deviations from its proper route in order to keep where the bottom was tolerably level and free from dangerous holes. The day was well-nigh spent, in contending with rain and flood, and it was quite dusk before we hailed the welcome sight of the hospitable huts of Kulongo.

There is a way of transporting baggage across such rivers as are tolerably free from danger, which appears to me to be eminently practicable, and to be suited peculiarly well to this country, but which I was sorry never to see brought into use. It is a method recommended by Barth* in the record of his enterprise, and consists simply of making a ferry by means of gourds. About a couple of dozen of moderate-sized calabashes are fastened together and covered over with layers of grass, and these are found to make a

* *Vide* 'Barth's Travels,' vol. ii. p. 254.

raft, which is quite capable of bearing several hundred-weight of goods. It has been to no purpose that I have called the attention of the Nubians to this contrivance; although they seemed forced to acknowledge the efficacy of the plan, they are not disposed to try it; however, for the benefit of future travellers, I beg to suggest it as a method which, under many circumstances, might afford them incomparable service.

Thus it was that after an absence of eight months I found myself happily back again at my old quarters. The place itself was little altered, except that the Seriba seemed to be in a more flourishing condition than in the previous year. The Bongo deserters, who had caused the failure of the Niam-niam expedition, had in consequence of a campaign against the Dinka tribes, on whose territory they had taken up their quarters, not only themselves returned to their former abode, but had induced three times as many Bongo as there were before to come and settle upon Ghattas's property. These people, who were now present in such superfluous numbers, had ten years ago all taken themselves off at the first appearance of strangers settling in their land. I saw that numerous tracts of woodlands had been cleared and brought under cultivation, and that various clusters of houses and farmsteads had grown up around. Altogether I should say that there could not have been much less than 600 fresh huts, which would represent at least 2500 souls. Since my departure, too, Ghattas senior had bidden his last farewell to earthly property, and his Seribas on the Upper Nile had all become the inheritance of his eldest son.

After being away so long I felt that it was almost like coming home, and realised something of the sensation of treading again the soil of my fatherland when I gazed afresh upon this country, so rich in its woodland charms, so abundant in its smiling sunny cultivation, so contrasted in its character to the gloomy and inhospitable forests of the

Niam-niam, which I had just quitted. I could not be otherwise than conscious that I had taken a step which brought me nearer Europe. The large establishment with its diversified population of full many a hue, the mere sight of clothes and linen that had known what it is to be washed, the unaccustomed diversity of victuals of which we could partake, all seemed so different to the contracted resources and meagre fare to which of late I had been subject, that I could hardly resist the impression that I must be living in a city, and could almost fancy myself already back at Khartoom. But before that could happen there were many obstacles to be overcome, and I must submit for various reasons to stay where I was. The journey to the Meshera, at this season of the year, presented nothing but countless marshes, the very birthplace of the miasma, which in its turn begets fever. Fresh deprivations for months to come would be the penalty of attempting at once to proceed up the river, and I had, moreover, reason to mistrust the capability of my constitution to withstand disease if I put it to too stern a test. I resolved, therefore, to tarry as patiently as I could, and to console myself with the pleasure of anticipation. In addition to this I had several important tasks which had never been satisfactorily finished, although I felt that the main object of my mission had been generally accomplished.

The temptation to a second Niam-niam tour was too strong to be resisted. I felt that it was my business to strike while the iron was hot, because future travellers only too probably would find that opportunities so good as my own were closed against them.

Exactly a month after our arrival a party was despatched for the purpose of fetching the supplies which were on their way to me. Not only my own effects, but Ghattas's too, were all lying crammed up in the meagre and not over-safe accommodation of the hold of the boats.

One occupation which engaged my attention continuously consisted in my supervision of the arrangement of my miscellaneous collection, which had increased very largely. It was necessary that everything should be put into a condition ready for its long transport.

Another demand upon my time arose from my having my correspondence for the ensuing year to complete and my journal to transcribe. My industry at this period had its full reward. The documents that I then copied and the outline maps that I dotted down were all preserved, and were the only compensation I had to make good the subsequent melancholy loss of all my other papers.

It will easily be understood how delighted I was, on the 23rd of August, to receive my new consignment of supplies. Although a good many articles had either been damaged by damp or devoured by insects, yet a sufficient proportion of them remained so uninjured that I was perfectly satisfied, and could venture with the utmost confidence to make my preparation for another journey. I was able to distribute a good number of presents of garments, pistols, and guns amongst the controllers of the various Seribas, whose acquaintance I had made, while the replenishing of my store of beads and stuffs gave me an opportunity of making certain acknowledgments of the good offices of my attendants. But the services which Mohammed Aboo Sammat had rendered me were far larger than all, and for these I had no return in my power to make.

Furnished thus afresh with a number of conveniences and luxuries which the interior did not supply, I found myself enjoying an amount of comfort that reminded me of Europe, and in the improvement of the quality of my daily food I almost forgot the hardships I had suffered.

By a somewhat circuitous route I had received several cases of wine. This was a gift which was especially acceptable, as being redolent of my distant home. That of which

I had dreamed as I tarried by the banks of the Nabambisso was now within my reach; it was no longer tantalizing to think of the "mountain port," for I had not only my bottle of wine, but a plentiful supply of other good things in addition; and nothing would have been a pleasanter task than to be able to entertain some lonely traveller like myself whom chance might have thrown across my path. To be able to open a bottle of wine at all in the heart of Africa was such an inexplicable piece of luck that it involuntarily brought to my mind the revenge of the gods and the ring of Polycrates, and to say the truth it was but a passing pleasure.

I was desirous of devoting the remainder of 1870 to the further and more complete investigation of the Dyoor and Bongo lands. With this intention I betook myself next to the Seriba of Doomookoo, and spent the first half of September in an interesting excursion to Kurkur, a district which, if ever the history of this land should be properly written, will have a claim to one of its most prominent chapters.

Kurkur, just at present a Seriba of Aboo Guroon's, twenty-eight miles to the W.S.W. of the chief Seriba of Ghattas, is a name already known, having been mentioned by Petherick, who, as the first explorer of the district, in 1856, had established a mart somewhere in the neighbourhood, making it the extreme point to which he advanced in his search for the ivory of the productive region.

Upon my route I crossed and re-crossed a number of small affluents which, coming westwards from Bongoland, joined the Dyoor. I gave, however, a particular attention to the course of the Molmul, which hitherto had been regarded merely as an arm of the Dyoor, but which I ascertained beyond a question to be an entirely independent stream. I crossed it close to Doomookoo, and again on my return at another place eight miles further to the north. It bears among the Bongo the name of Muĩ.

Between Doomookoo and Kurkur the scenery was pretty and undulated; wooded eminences alternating with extensive tracts of cultivated plain. The rises in the ground are made by low ridges of hills that run in a north-west direction on either side of the Nyedokoo, an affluent of the Dyoor that is always full of water. I looked in upon two little Seribas belonging to Agahd, called Kehre and Neshirr, and just before reaching Kurkur I called at Nguddoo, one of Kurshook Ali's settlements. The various territories of the different traders are quite confusing, as they lie scattered about in little enclaves like the petty Thuringian dukedoms in Germany.

The present Seriba of Kurkur is situated in a flat bushy region, rich in every variety of game. I was told that the former Seriba, visited by Petherick, stood eight miles to the south-west, on the Legbe, an important affluent of the Dyoor. Twelve miles further to the south, and parallel to the Legbe, is the Lako, which is another tributary of the Dyoor.

I remained at Kurkur for three days. Whilst I was there the natives killed a couple of giraffes. The controller had in his possession several of these animals alive, which had been caught in the neighbourhood, and for which he hoped to find a sale at Khartoom.

The spotted hyæna dogs (*Canis pictus*) are very common in this region. These dangerous animals have a partiality for the steppes and open brushwood, and, congregating in herds, hunt down the smaller antelopes, especially bushbucks. No case was known where they had attempted to attack men. Some of their skins are most brilliantly marked, and exhibit such a combination of red, white, yellow, and black spots that the hyæna dog may fairly claim to be the most particoloured of all mammalia. I saw one specimen in the Seriba that was perfectly tame, requiring no other restraint than a cord, and yielding to its master with all

the docility of an ordinary dog. This fact appears to corroborate the assertion of Livingstone (which, however, he makes with some reserve, not having personally witnessed the circumstance), that the natives of the Kalahari Desert are accustomed to break in this animal and train it for the chase.

Twelve miles to the north of Kurkur was another subsidiary Seriba, belonging to Aboo Guroon, and called Dangah, after a Bongo chief who lived there at the time when Petherick was in the country; another surviving chief named Dyow, also mentioned by Petherick, had his abode five miles further to the west; he came to pay me a visit, and retaining the recollection of the condition of the country under an earlier aspect now passed away, he made the usual lamentations over the destitution of the land and its present deficiency of game.

The Nyedokoo, enclosed by dense jungles of bamboo, passes close to Dangah, and in the rainy season is about thirty feet wide and ten feet deep. The inmates of the Seriba were supplied by its bright and sparkling waters, and I rejoiced at having an opportunity to send my stock of linen that it might be properly washed. Of the forty Seribas that I visited I saw scarcely more than three that were situated in immediate proximity to running water, the supply obtained from the wells being generally impure, besides being obtained in quantities too limited to be of much service for washing clothes.

The Khartoomers seem to have a very wonderful faculty for picking out the worst possible places for the formation of their settlements. Although they are excellent swimmers, they are so accustomed to the dust and dirt of their own home and to the turbid floods of their beloved Nile, that even here, where streams are so abundant, they have a morbid prejudice against all pure water whatsoever. They forget that the waters of the Nile are wholesome in spite

of being turbid, and make no distinction between them and the waters of the noisome swamps of Central Africa; while they heap imprecations upon the insalubrity of the climate, which, they say, gives them pestilence, guinea-worm, fever, skin disease, syphilis, and small-pox, they take no pains to avoid the very spots which are the primary cause of all their suffering.

After leaving Dangah I turned back towards the east, and, having called at Agahd's subsidiary Seriba Dubor on the way, I soon re-entered my own headquarters. The circuit I had thus completed was about sixty-five miles.

During my brief absence an event had transpired in Ghattas's Seriba that had alarmed the whole community, and which furnished a topic of anxious speculation for some weeks to come. It appeared that two of the Nubian soldiers belonging to the Seriba had betaken themselves to a Dyoor smith in the neighbourhood for the purpose of getting him to forge them some rings. While they were sitting in the smithy quietly watching the operations, all at once they were surrounded by a troop of Dinka warriors, who were scouring the country. The sight of a couple of unprotected "Turks" had suggested to the Dinka the idea of taking revenge for the last raid that they had suffered, and the unfortunate victims were attacked, cruelly tortured by lance-wounds, and carried back dead to the Seriba. The entire force turned out to punish the aggressors if they could; but the Dinka had had so good a start, that they were far beyond pursuit. The occurrence gave a general feeling of insecurity to the whole Seriba; the people were afraid to move about unarmed, and even in their ordinary domestic engagements carried their guns under their arms. This excessive prudence on their part, involving, as it did, a large increase of danger from firearms, was far from agreeable to myself. The risk of being burnt out was still greater than it had previously been, and not relishing my position in close proximity to so

many straw-huts, I was anxious to set up my quarters at some little distance away; but Idrees, the controller, declared that he should have to answer for my safety with his head, and would not permit me to build outside the palisade.

On the 15th of September Mohammed Aboo Sammat passed through the Seriba on his way to the river, with his store of ivory. It was a good opportunity for me to send intelligence of myself to Europe; and, under his care, my letters were despatched by the speediest route, so that in the course of five months they were in the hands of my friends. A fortnight sufficed for the indefatigable Mohammed to reach the Meshera, start off his boats on their way to Khar-toom, and return to our Seriba.

Mohammed upon his return made me a present of a somewhat uncommon description. On his way through the forest of Alwady he had fallen in with a troop of elephants, two of which had been killed by his people, one of them being a female that was accompanied by her still sucking calf. The little elephant had been secured and attached to the caravan, and on arriving at the Seriba was introduced to my quarters as a gift to myself. I was in possession of a milch cow, and took the greatest pains to cherish my new *protégé* by supplying it with large quantities of milk; but all my attention was in vain, the young animal had been so weakened by improper or insufficient diet, and so exhausted by the forced marches, that no subsequent care could save it, and in a few days it expired. It was quite touching to watch the poor helpless creature in its last gasps. Whoever has observed the eye of the elephant will remember that, in spite of its smallness and natural short-sightedness, it exhibits an intelligence, almost amounting to reason, that is seen in no other quadruped. My juvenile specimen had already begun to display the instinctive cleanliness of its nature. I was told that on its journey it stopped at every pool and spring while it pumped up the water with its trunk, and squirted it, as if

from a hose, all over its body to wash off the dust of the road and the mud that it had contracted in crossing the swamps.

For my own amusement I had made a collection of several other animals, which I lodged in my hut, in order to have them under constant supervision and to be able to observe their habits. My menagerie contributed very much to the characteristic features of my hut. Outside were tethered my donkey and my cow; but the calf, being too delicate to withstand the rain, was brought in at nights, and fastened to the tall scaffolding which supported my bed, the noxious miasma during the rainy period making it desirable for every traveller to spend his hours of sleep raised as much as possible above the level of the ground. Different corners of the hut, which was already encumbered with every variety of furniture, were appropriated to my dogs, two caracal lynxes, a ratel, or honey-badger, and a zebra-ichneumon. These creatures lived in continual feud, and did not show the least likelihood of becoming "a happy family." The honey-badger and the ichneumon were perhaps the most amicable, but even they were continually snapping at each other; still they never came into any mortal conflict. But the caracals were utterly implacable, and fought most savagely: in spite, however, of their general faculty of self-defence, one of them in a desperate encounter with a Bongo dog was bitten in the throat and died on the spot.

I had brought a large number of lances and of bows and arrows from the Monbuttoo, and felt inclined not only to try the efficiency of the weapons, but to test the marksmanship of the representatives of the various tribes that were included in the promiscuous population of the Seriba. Accordingly more than once I set up one of the Monbuttoo shields as a target, and instituted a general shooting-match. Tikkitikki was an eminently successful shot, the grotesque attitudes into which he threw himself to exhibit his dexterity

ever causing a great diversion : I was, in fact, quite proud of my Pygmy, and his reputation was so bruited about, that many Khartoomers came from distant Seribas to gratify their curiosity by looking at him.

One evening during the exercises I met with an accident which might have been serious, if not fatal, in its consequences. An iron arrow struck my forehead and, although it only slightly grazed the skin, the pain for a moment was quite agonizing ; it soon passed off, however, and I took no further notice of the matter than applying a little goulard-water ; but, according to my ordinary habit, I sat up writing until late into the night, exposed to a draught at the entrance of my hut, and caught a cold in the wound, which became exceedingly inflamed. When I woke the next morning I was unable to open my eyes, and on lifting up my eyelids with my fingers, I could see in my looking-glass that my whole face was immensely swollen. Fearful of erysipelas, I could devise nothing better than wrapping up my face in calico and staying patiently in bed. On the third day I had the satisfaction of finding that the inflammation had subsided, and that all fear of danger was gone. In regions such as these the traveller cannot be too careful in his treatment of even the most insignificant wound. Once before I had experienced something of the sort during a forced march through the desert about Thebes : a gnat had slightly stung my instep, and such a violent inflammation had supervened that I had been obliged to keep my bed for several days.

The proceeds of this year's cattle-raids upon the Dinka had been exceedingly large ; and as Ghattas's company had been prevented from carrying out a Niam-niam campaign, they had been able to concentrate all their forces for plunder. The captured cattle, under the charge of a number of Dinka herdsmen, had been installed in a large yard set apart for the purpose close to the Seriba. There was consequently no lack of meat, and, at a very reduced price, I was allowed to

purchase whatever cattle I required to be slaughtered for myself and for my people.

My milch cow was an almost invaluable possession. In spite of its yield of milk being somewhat meagre, it supplied me for eight months with a morning draught, and in the subsequent season of necessity its contribution to my daily diet was still more precious. Half the cattle sickened with all sorts of internal disorders, and the greater proportion of the animals that were slaughtered would not much longer have endured the climate. I am sure, however, that notwithstanding the fact that these breeds have been entirely unaccustomed to salt, its admixture with their food would infuse new life and vigour into them; nothing but this, I feel convinced, kept up my own supply of milk and prevented my cow from becoming emaciated; at first the dose had to be administered by force, but the creature not only soon became accustomed to it, but would run after me for a handful of salt, like a lap-dog for its sugar.

During the rainy season of 1870 the Dinka cattle were decimated by various plagues, and the district of the Lao was especially ravaged, old Shol losing some thousand of her stock. The most common of these cattle plagues was called Atyeng by the Dinka, showing itself by open wounds like lance-cuts in the hoofs; sometimes the wounds would make their appearance on the tongue, rendering the animal incapable of grazing, so that it could get no nourishment, and sank through exhaustion. Another malady, called Abwott, to which only the cows are subject, consists of a swelling which affects the uterus, and carries them off in a night. A third, known as the Odwangdwang, appears just as contagious, though not so generally fatal as the two former; the animals refuse their food for forty-eight hours, but, under favourable circumstances, on the third day commence grazing again.

The Khareef of 1870 terminated on the 21st of September, no rain falling after that date. A heavy fall of hail occurred

on the 25th of August, when the hailstones were as large as cherries; this was the only time that I remember seeing hail within the tropics, although in May 1864, when I was on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea, just to the north of the tropic of Cancer, I witnessed one of the severest hailstorms that could be imagined.

This year's rainy season was remarkable for the violence of the separate storms, but also for the small number of decidedly wet days; of these I counted ten in July, twelve in August, and ten in September, the number altogether corresponding very nearly to what I had recorded in the previous year. Nevertheless, the rainfall was so great that the sorghum in all the low-lying fields rotted in the ground; the condition of the crops, however, was equally bad in all places where the soil, although rocky, was sloping, and threw off the water too rapidly, for between the intervals of rain the heat of the sun was so overpowering that the corn was parched up through being drained of moisture.

By reference to a few notes that I saved I find that the 4th of October, in a meteorological point of view, was an important day, as being the date on which the wind first veered round to the north-east. I cannot speak positively as to the date when the south wind had first set in, as I was absent amongst the Niam-niam and Monbuttoo at the time; but my impression is that it was not far from the same time as in the year before, viz., the 16th of March; thus the entire period during which the south-west winds had been prevalent was seven months. But although the north-east wind had thus commenced on the 4th of October, there was no perceptible fall in the temperature until the 20th of November; after that the thermometer at sunrise stood at about 70° Fahr.

As the flora at this season presented little with which I was not already familiar, my time was spent very much under the same routine as in the previous autumn; I continued my occupations of measuring the natives, studying

their dialects, collecting insects, preparing skulls, and joining the people in chase of small birds. But, all along, I did not lose sight of my projected journey, and applied all the experience I had gained so that I might equip myself for renewing my wanderings with the best advantage. My health was by no means impaired, but, on the contrary, I had gained fresh vigour in the pure air of the southern highlands, where I had undergone more fatigue than I could have previously trusted myself to encounter; I came to the resolution, therefore, that I need not fear to accompany Ghattas's next expedition, and visit the central portions of the Niam-niam countries that were still unknown to me. The journey was specially attractive to me as promising to enable me to complete my exploration of the hydrographical system of the Gazelle, taking me as it would to the middle sections of those rivers, which, indeed, I had already crossed, but only in their upper and their lower courses. By this means I indulged the hope that, under favourable circumstances, I might be able once for all to settle the details of this particular district of the Nile territory, and so to make one contribution more towards building up the true theory which may solve the complicated problem of Central Africa.

Being desirous of making some exchanges and effecting some purchases to complete my supplies, I set out on a tour to Kurshook Ali's head Seriba, with which I was already well acquainted. This excursion occupied from the 24th of October until the 4th of November. The owner, as already mentioned, had been sent out by the Egyptian Government at the head of a body of troops; but before reaching the interior he had succumbed to the pestilential climate of the Dinka, and had been succeeded in command by a Turkish Aga, who had accompanied him as lieutenant, and who, having broken up his camp in the Dinka country, had turned farther to the west.

Credit had been opened for me in all the establishments

of the Khartoomers, and not only were the magazines of Kurshook Ali's Seriba amply supplied with stores, but Khalil, the controller, received me hospitably and rendered me all possible service, so that I accomplished my business most satisfactorily.

The little trip gave me another opportunity of twice crossing the Dyoor, and thus, by taking fresh measurements, of adding to the information I had already gained about this important river. At ten o'clock in the morning, when the atmosphere was at a temperature just under 80° Fahr., the temperature of the water was just over 90°.

The passage over was effected in a ferry-boat of the most wretched description; it was composed of nothing more than a couple of hollow stems bound together by ropes and caulked with common clay, the miserable craft demanding perpetual vigilance to keep it afloat at all. It is a striking proof of the unconquerable indolence of the Nubians that during their fifteen years' residence in the land, although they are beyond a question acquainted with the art of ship-building, they have never attempted to construct an ordinary boat for the daily passage of such an important river as this.

The aspect of the vegetation was very similar to that of late autumn in Europe. Quite recently as the water had left the steppes, the low parts of them were already beginning to look withered, and in the woods the trees were rapidly becoming more and more bare. Amongst smaller and less important plants I found a considerable number of new species, which either had previously escaped my notice, or which probably do not spring up until after the receding of the waters.

On our way back we were entertained in the little Seriba Dyoor Awet, where roasted elephant-foot constituted the speciality of the repast.

Before we reached Aboo Guroon's Seriba a ludicrous

circumstance occurred, which while it brought out afresh the evidence of the dastard cowardice of my Niam-niam interpreter Gyabir, who had made such an outcry when wounded in the arm by the A-Banga, at the same time exposed me to the risk of losing one of my invaluable guns. He was marching along in the rear of the caravan when a number of Dyoor chanced to come across his path; mistaking them for Dinka, to whom they bore a very decided resemblance, he took to his heels and made his way to the most inaccessible part of the steppe, where he intended to remain till night should enable him to escape unobserved. Our route led us so close to the Dinka territory that we were aware no one could wander half a league away without being in imminent peril of being captured; it was, therefore, with no small concern that on our arrival we discovered that Gyabir was missing. We could only conjecture that he had lost his way. Abou Guroon at once despatched his black soldiers in all directions, but they returned at night without having discovered the least clue to the whereabouts of the wanderer. Early next morning, to the general surprise, Gyabir made his appearance; he acknowledged that he had heard the shouts of the men who were making the search for him, but that he could not venture to quit his place of concealment, because he was thoroughly aware that if by any misadventure he should fall into the hands of the Dinka, being a Niam-niam, he could have no hope of finding any quarter.

Whilst here I received sad news of my friend Mohammed. On his way back from the Meshera to Sabby he had hoped by taking a short cut through the wilderness to avoid all conflict with the marauding parties of his enemy Shereefee; but, in spite of all his precautions, his antagonist had gained information of his movements, and, setting an ambush in the forest, made a murderous attack upon him. The assault was far more sanguinary in its results than that of the previous

year. As usual the Khartoomers refused to fire upon their compatriots, and Mohammed was thus entirely dependent for his protection upon his black spearmen, of whom several were killed. Mohammed's cousin, who had brought the stores from Khartoom, fell a victim to a gun-shot quite at the beginning of the fray, and Mohammed himself received so many sabre cuts about his face and head that, deluged in blood, he was left on the ground for dead. Shereefee's Bongo pursued Mohammed's Bongo in all directions, and Mohammed's stores all became the spoil of Shereefee, who did not as before scatter the beads and valuables about the ground, but had everything conveyed to his own Seriba. The booty amounted in all to at least two hundred packages. The shameless marauder made an avowed boast of his achievements, ostentatiously displayed his ill-gotten wealth to all around him, and even strutted about arrayed in Mohammed's new clothes.

In the course of the night Mohammed was picked up, apparently lifeless, by his faithful blacks and carried to Sabby, where he received every due attention, but it was some weeks before he was sufficiently recovered to write an account of his misfortunes, which he despatched to the friendly Seribas, sending it by witnesses who could explain the true condition of affairs.

These events naturally excited the utmost indignation in the Seribas, all the controllers of which were friendly and well-disposed towards Mohammed. The slave-traders, on the contrary, who had settled in the country, and all their adherents, took the part of Shereefee. That a Mussulman, on a peaceful journey, should be the subject of a premeditated attack by one of his own faith, was a circumstance without a precedent even in this land of violence and club-law; but, what most provoked my own anger and disgust was the cool indifference with which the commander of the Egyptian troops (the lieutenant who had succeeded Kurshook Ali)

viewed the whole affair. When Mohammed appeared in camp and demanded that retributive justice should be exacted for the ill-treatment and loss that he had sustained, the commander endeavoured to throw doubts upon all his statements, and did not hesitate, in spite of the testimony of all the witnesses, to shield Sherreefee, by whom, no doubt, he had been previously bribed. Who shall say what order or justice is to be expected in this land of license, when even the Government official, sent out as the first representative of the State to protect and administer its laws, could proceed to such a degree of avaricious partiality? And yet the people in Khartoom have the audacity to descant upon "the suppression of the slave-trade!"

Aboo Guroon, with whom I spent several pleasant days, was busy from morning to night in his preparations for the forthcoming Niam-niam campaign, and it afforded me much amusement to watch him as he sorted out and packed his varied store of ammunition. Several companies had combined for the expedition, and he invited me to remain and start with him, as Ghattas's party, to which I was attached, would not follow for some weeks later.

In this common enterprise Aboo Guroon had a special interest of his own, having but a short time since lost one of his Seribas in the Niam-niam land. The garrison had been massacred, and all the arms and ammunition had fallen into the hands of the sons of Ezo, who having got possession of the weapons turned them to such good account that they inspired the Nubians with great respect for their military skill. These events had taken place to the west of my Niam-niam route, and had an indirect connection with the proceedings taken against Mohammed by Mbeeoh, who had been surprised by Aboo Guroon's company in the same way as the combined companies of Ghattas and Aboo Sammat. The scene of war had merely been transferred from Mbeeoh's territory to that of the sons of Tombo and Ezo.

Although I should have much preferred to travel in company with Aboo Guroon rather than with Ghattas's agent, there was one insuperable impediment: my baggage was not ready, and it would require some little time to select the articles that would be of most practical use to me as well as what would involve me in the smallest outlay for bearers. I was obliged, therefore, to forego Aboo Guroon's offer. If I had joined him I should have escaped the calamity of fire from which I soon afterwards suffered so severe a loss, but perhaps only to share a worse fate, for Aboo Guroon was one of the first victims of an engagement with the Niam-niam, a very few days after he set out.

Just at this time all the controllers of the different Seribas were actively engaged in preparing for their combined and extensive ivory expedition. With their aggregated forces they hoped to subdue the refractory chieftains in the north, who had been guilty of much treachery towards the Nubians: their primary proceedings were to be taken against Ndoruma, the daring son of Ezo.

It had been the rapid diminution of the ivory in these districts that had caused the Khartoomers of late to direct their expeditions to the territories of the powerful kings of the south, leaving the smaller chieftains with a comparatively insignificant interest in the traffic. These chieftains, therefore, did all in their power to obstruct the progress of the Nubians, and endeavoured by foul means, instead of by fair, to obtain a share of the copper which they coveted. They commenced a system of hostility to get possession of the store of metal which, as long as they had ivory to dispose of, had come to them in the peaceful way of commerce. To the dismay of the Khartoomers, the natives soon showed that they were quite capable of putting whatever firearms they captured to a formidable use, and I shall very soon have to relate how completely all the Niam-niam expeditions

came to grief in consequence of the vigorous opposition of the natives.

Meanwhile I was fully occupied by my preparation for the long journey before me. My anticipations were not to be realised. Just at the time when I was rejoicing that my health had braved all the perils of the climate and my good fortune seemed to be at its height, I was doomed to drink of that bitter cup of disappointment from which none of my predecessors in Central Africa have been exempt.

CHAPTER XX.

A disastrous day. Failure to rescue my effects. Burnt Seriba by night. Comfortless bed. A wintry aspect. Rebuilding the Seriba. Cause of the fire. Idrees's apathy. An exceptionally wet day. Bad news of Niam-niam expedition. Measuring distance by footsteps. Start to the Dyoor. Khalil's kind reception. A restricted wardrobe. Temperature at its minimum. Corn requisitions of Egyptian troops. Slave trade carried on by soldiers. Suggestions for improved transport. Chinese hand-barrows. Defeat of Khartoomers by Ndoruma. Nubians' fear of bullets. A lion shot. Nocturnal disturbance. Measurements of the river Dyoor. Hippopotamus hunt. Habits of hippopotamus. Hippopotamus fat. Nile whips. Recovery of a manuscript. Character of the Nubians. Nubian superstitions. Strife in the Egyptian camp.

THE description which has already been given of the large establishment owned by the firm of Ghattas, where, with all my provisions, I was now awaiting the start of the caravan, must have made the place in a large degree familiar to the reader. For the clearer apprehension of the event I have now to relate it may be advisable to repeat the following particulars. The colony consisted of about six hundred huts and sheds, which were built almost entirely of straw and bamboo. In the intervals between the huts were erected the large sun-screens known as "rokooba," which were made of the same materials; and, to separate allotment from allotment, there were long lines of fences, which were likewise composed of straw, and these were arranged so close to each other that they scarcely admitted the narrowest of passages, perhaps but a few feet across, to run between them. Everything that human ingenuity could contrive seemed to have been done to insure that, with the cessation of the rainy

season there should commence a period of the extremest peril, and, for myself, I can avow that fear of fire became my bugbear by day and my terror by night. In spite of my remonstrances I saw the crowding together of the huts continually become more and more dense, and the enclosure packed full to the utmost limits of its capacity. It became a manifest impossibility in the case of the occurrence of fire, on however small a scale, to prevent it spreading into such a conflagration that the safety of the whole establishment must be imperilled. The material of the structures, dried in the tropical heat, would accelerate and insure the devastation that must necessarily ensue.

The catastrophe, which I had dreaded with such ominous apprehension, befell us at midday on the 1st of December.

This most disastrous day of my life had opened in the accustomed carrying out of its routine. I had been engaged all the morning with my correspondence and in arranging the notes of the various occurrences that had transpired since the despatch of my previous budget. I had partaken of my frugal midday meal, and was just on the point of resuming my writing, when all at once I caught the sound of the excited Bongo shrieking out "poddu, poddu" (fire, fire!) Long, how long none can tell, will the memory of this burst of alarm haunt my ear. It makes me shudder even now. Eager to know the truth, and to ascertain how far the ill-omened apparition of misfortune had already spread, I rushed to the doorway of my hut, and beheld that the devouring element was doing its work at a distance of only three huts from my own; the flame was rising fiercely from the top of a hut; there was no room for hope; just at that time of day the north-east wind always blew with its greatest violence, and it was only too plain that the direction of the gale was bringing the fire straight towards my residence. The space of a few minutes was all that remained for me to rescue what I could.

Without an instant's delay, my people flocked to the scene of the alarm. Without stopping to discuss what was most prudent or to consider what was most valuable, they laid hold upon anything that came to hand. The negro-boys took particular care of all the stuffs, and of their own clothes as being of the greatest consequence in their estimation, and by their means all my bedding and two of my leathern portmanteaus were carried safely out of the Seriba. I myself flung my manuscript into a great chest which had already been provided against any accident of the sort, but my care was of no avail. My servants succeeded in hastily conveying five of my largest boxes and two cases to the open space of the Seriba where the direction of the wind made us presume they would be out of danger; but we only too soon learnt our mistake; the wind chopped and veered about, and the hot blasts fanned the flames in every direction till there was hardly a place to stand, and it was hopeless to reckon upon any more salvage. A prompt retreat became absolutely necessary; great masses of burning straw began to fall in every quarter, and the high fences of straw left but narrow avenues by which we could escape. The flames sometimes seemed to rise to a height of a hundred feet above the combustible structures of dry grass, and then all at once they would descend, but only to lick with destructive fury some adjacent spot, while a perpetual shower of hot sparks glared again in the roaring air. The crowds, as they rushed away before the advancing flames, were like a swarm of flies buzzing around a lighted torch. I cast a look towards the remnant of my property which we had thought we had rescued, and to my horror I perceived that the chests were enveloped in smoke, and immediately afterwards were encircled by the flames. It was a moment of despair. How my heart sank at the sight none can imagine, for those chests contained all my manuscripts, journals, and records, in comparison with which the loss of all the effects

in my hut appeared utterly insignificant, though they were the burdens of a hundred bearers. Regardless of the shower of sparks, which singed off my very hair, I made a frantic rush forwards, the dogs, with their feet all scorched, howling at my side, and breathlessly stopped under a tree, where I found a shelter alike from the raging of the ardent flame and from the noonday glare. In the confusion of the flight I had been unable to get my hat, and was thus fully exposed to the midday heat.

Below us from amidst the crackling waves of fire came the crashing noise of the roofs as they collapsed; and ever and again there broke forth the louder report caused by the explosion of our ammunition, and many a loaded gun that had been left behind discharged itself and exposed the fugitives to a new and random danger. The Nubians behaved themselves with a strange composure, not to say indifference; the majority had little or nothing to lose, yet many an account-book must have perished in the flames, so that not a few of them hoped to turn the disaster to a profitable account. The priests, however, were not quite so unmoved; they stood before their doors and howled out the shrieking formulæ of their incantations, by which they pretended to control the course of the raging fire. It was very remarkable that the spot where a Faki had been buried, and which was marked with a white banner to distinguish it as a place for prayer, was spared from the general conflagration, although it was within a few yards of where my burnt chests had been laid. The departed Faki was now as good as a canonised saint, and had proved himself a genuine sheikh.

The entire Seriba by this time was wrapped in flames, which seemed still to spread in every quarter. The wind, as it rose, carried away with it whole bundles of smouldering straw, which it soon fanned into fire amidst the huts that were scattered round on the exterior of the palisade.

Very dry at this season, the steppe had hitherto been

preserved, because the harvest was not yet complete, and it was not very long before this too was caught by the raging fire, and even the old trees around did not escape, so that it seemed almost as if the whole district were being submerged in a sea of flame. Half an hour had completed the great work of devastation. After that period it was possible to make a dash between the charred posts of the huts, but only for a few moments, so intense was the heat of the ground and so overpowering the glowing atmosphere that pervaded the scene of destruction. A crowd of people kept on bringing vessels of water to try and extinguish the flames before they had totally destroyed the clay "googahs" which held the sole supply of corn.

After a while I succeeded in getting to my garden, which, bereft of the greater part of its recently-constructed hedge of bamboo, presented a truly melancholy aspect. As the sun sank low we began to make a search for anything that might have been spared amidst the still glowing embers of the huts. I had saved little beyond my life. I had lost all my clothes, my guns, and the best part of my instruments. I was without tea and without quinine. As I stood gazing upon the piles of ashes I could not help reckoning up the accumulation of my labours which had there, beneath them all, been buried in this hapless destiny. All my preparations for the projected expedition to the Niam-niam; all the produce of my recent journey; all the entomological collection that I had made with such constant interest; all the examples of native industry which I had procured by so much care; all my registers of meteorological events which had been kept day by day and without interruption ever since my first departure from Suakin, and in which I had inscribed some 7000 barometrical observations; all my journals, with their detailed narrative of the transactions of 825 days; all my elaborate measurements of the bodies of the natives, which I had been at so much pains and expense

to induce them to permit; all my vocabularies, which it had been so tedious a business to compile; everything, in the course of a single hour; everything was gone, the plunder of the flames. It had been for the sake of better protection, as I thought, that I had resolved not to part with my journals, and had kept my collection of insects in my own possession; I had been afraid of any misadventure befalling them; but now they might just as well have been at the bottom of the Nile.

There I sat amongst my tobacco-shrubs upon my stock of bedding that had been rescued from the flames; but I fear that I could not boast of overmuch of the spirit of resignation. The entire remnant of my property was soon reckoned up; it consisted of a couple of chests, my three barometers, an azimuth-compass, and the ironwork which survived from the different productions of the Niam-niam and Monbuttoo.

Evening drew on: just as usual, the cow with her calf came and provided me with two glasses of milk. I had a yam or two, a picking from the inside of a half-burnt tuber, a morsel from a similarly half-burnt lump of pickled meat, and I had come to the end of my slender stock of provisions. My dogs kept up a continual howling; their sufferings from their burnt feet must have been excessive, and they whined in concert with the general desolation. The servants, however, were as calm and undisturbed as usual. Neither the Nubians nor the negroes seemed to be much concerned; and why should they? They had just nothing to lose.

I looked around and counted up my party. It consisted of seven bipeds and seven quadrupeds; the same number of each, and each of about the same sensibility.

When the darkness of night had really set in, the region of the Seriba had all the aspect of an active colliery. The venerable fig-tree in front of the main entrance was still flaring away, and the palisade was yet burning, apparently shutting in the scene of ruin with a garland of light. It was

a ghastly illumination. To the Nubians the spectacle was not altogether a novelty. The sight of a negro village in flames was to them familiar enough; but now the tables were turned, and they had to learn for themselves what it is to be hungry and destitute of every prospect of supply. Such were the conditions under which that night we had to seek our rest.

Hardly anything could be more impressive than the scene that revealed itself on the following morning. Not merely the places where the fire had raged, but the regions around were strewn with a thick layer of ashes; the steppes and sorghum-fields were whitened with them. It would be easy to have imagined that the glowing green of the tropics had for a time retreated, and allowed itself to be replaced by a gloomy and wintry vegetation transported from the arctic zone. Almost as white as snow were the layers of ashes that had settled on the sorghum-fields, only broken by the heaps of half-burnt clods that rose like hillocks of turf upon a moor. The smoke still lingered on the ground, and veiled the general scene; the trees seemed to stretch out their dry bare arms to heaven, and helped to complete the resemblance to the wintry aspect of the frozen world.

It was a pitiful sight to watch the brown and swarthy figures of the negroes, wrapped in their brown and swarthy rags, run hither and thither amongst the still smouldering ruins; and the wretchedness of the view was not a little aggravated by the bloated carcasses of half-roasted donkeys and sheep that lay scattered about in various parts. Troops of women were bustling about and carrying water-vessels of every sort, eager in their endeavours to put out the lurking fire that was threatening the corn-magazines that hitherto had escaped. These clay-built reservoirs of corn were the only memorials that seemed to survive the devastation. Blackened indeed by the smoke, the "googahs" were still erect. Varying in height from five feet to seven, they were

hardly ever wanting in the homes either of the Dyoor or Dinka: and now as they stood surmounting the otherwise universal *débris*, their very numbers made them conspicuous, and, forming a fantastic feature in the scene, gave their testimony as to what had been the crowded proximity of hut to hut.

Hurrying up from the surrounding country, the natives flocked to search for beads amidst the ruins, although every bead must necessarily have been spoilt. Others of them, with a better purpose, set to work to construct sheds of straw for the shelter of the houseless.

The next day was opened with a general effort to restore the buildings of the Seriba. Hundreds of Bongo, Dyoor, and Dinka brought the necessary wood, straw, and bamboos, and proceeded to construct their new huts with much dexterity: on an average, six men would completely finish a hut twenty feet in diameter in a couple of days.

No common sense had been learnt through the late calamity, for not only was the Seriba erected on the selfsame spot, but in the selfsame manner as before. The fear of being assassinated by the Dinka was assigned as the reason for refusing to follow the example of Khalil, the controller of Kurshook Ali's Seriba, who, in rebuilding his establishment, had insisted upon placing the Vokeel's residence and the magazines alone within the palisade, leaving the soldiers' huts in detached groups outside. In vain, day after day, did I repeat my warning of the danger they were inviting of the repetition of a similar misfortune; but all my exhortations to care and prudence were utterly wasted; the people were obstinate, and I could not help passing many a sleepless night in continual dread of a second catastrophe that I was aware I was powerless to avert.

The cause of the fire, when subsequently discovered, did not give me the least surprise. One of Ghattas's soldiers had been quarrelling with his slave, having accused her of

unfaithfulness; and in order to frighten her, and extort a confession of her guilt, he had discharged a gun into the interior of his hut. I afterwards remembered hearing the report; as gunshots, however, were far from uncommon, I paid no particular attention to the circumstance: but the smouldering paper-cartridge had lodged in the straw-roof, and ten minutes later the hut was in flames. Although the origin of the fire was thus easily explained, the Mohammedan fatalists never swerved from their belief that the misfortune was unavoidable, and was ordained by the decree of destiny.

All my reproaches failed to reach the real offender, who immediately after the fire quitted the scene of the disaster he had brought about. But, in my opinion, Idrees, the controller, was himself primarily responsible for all the trouble. He allowed a senseless firing to be carried on inside the Seriba, not only at every new moon, but on a hundred other occasions, and I was in a perpetual state of vexation and anger whenever I saw the lighted wads flying about amongst the dry straw-roofs: then, again, he allowed each person to increase the number of his huts, rokoobas, and hedges, just as he liked, until the appearance of the Seriba was that of an inexplicable maze. In his capacity of Vokeel it was undoubtedly his place to allot a proper space to each individual; but so far from seeing that this was legitimately done, he himself did his utmost to increase the complication of buildings, and had erected a huge rokooba for his horse just in front of my hut; it was this very rokooba that had been the means of communicating the flames to the chests containing my manuscripts, as they stood on a portion of what, previously to its erection, had been a wide open space.

By the 11th of December some newly-built huts were at my disposal, a place of security on that day proving doubly welcome, as a heavy storm of rain came on about four o'clock in the morning, lasting for quite half an hour. This exceptional storm rose from the south-east, veered round to the

south, and finally passed away towards the south-west. The entire day remained cold and dull, with slight showers falling at intervals. For the first time the temperature fell to 65° Fahr., having previously varied between 75° and 80°. The coldest season of the year now set in, and lasted for a couple of months; during this time the thermometer in the early morning was comparatively low, and the barometer varied much more continually than in the height of the rainy season.

Bad news flies apace, and following close upon the destruction of the Seriba came the intelligence of the total defeat of that first detachment of the Niam-niam expedition that had been despatched to the south; besides a number of native bearers, 150 Mohammedans were reported to have lost their lives.

The immediate effect of these disastrous tidings was to make me know that all hope of extending my wanderings in that direction must finally be abandoned. Bitter as had been the misfortune that had befallen me, it would not of itself have deterred me from my project of a second Niam-niam journey, but, now that Aboo Guroon was killed, there was no one who could provide me afresh with such articles as I had lost. I possessed neither boots nor shoes, guns nor ammunition, paper nor instruments, and even my watches, which were so essential to me, were gone; what use then to think any further of a journey to unknown countries under such circumstances as these? Convinced of the vanity of any attempt to proceed, I was therefore obliged, with a heavy heart, to turn my thoughts towards Europe; no succours could reach me for more than a year, and even then my great distance from Egypt made their safe arrival more than doubtful.

Still more than six months remained before the trading-boats would start on their return journey down the Nile; I felt bound to employ this time to the best of my powers,

and I was not long left to make up my mind as to what I would do. Amongst the few of my effects that were snatched from the flames I discovered ink, together with materials for writing and drawing: and the sight of some sketches that had accidentally been rescued with my bedding first roused me from my feelings of total despair, and told me that I must once again begin to collect and investigate, and preserve my observations by means of pen and pencil. Necessarily somewhat depressed in spirits I once again turned to as many of my former pursuits as I could, although I felt the increasing pressure of poverty and hardship, and was as dependent as a beggar upon the hospitality of the Nubians, many of whom viewed my presence in the country with suspicion and distrust. My present discomfort was still further aggravated by its contrast with the comparative ease and abundance which the arrival of my European stores had latterly afforded me.

I came to the resolution of quitting the scene of my disaster, and, accompanied by my servants, determined to withdraw to Kurshook Ali's* Seriba beyond the Dyoor, where I knew that Khalil, the kind-hearted controller, would render me what relief he could under my present urgent necessities, although the amenities of life to which the Nubians had any pretension were very few. Accordingly on the 16th of December, followed by a small herd of cows, I turned my back upon the Seriba that had arisen from the ashes of its predecessor, and started by a new and more southerly route for my intended quarters.

For nearly three years my watches had gone with remarkable accuracy, they were ordinary Geneva *ancres perfectionnées*, having cost about twenty-five thalers a-piece; their loss was quite irreparable, for the Nubians have no

* The Turkish name is properly pronounced Kutahook Aly, but I give the words as I believe they are more generally written.

other means of computing time than upon the great dial of the firmament,* which requires no winding up, and they tell the hour of the day by simply observing the position of the sun in the heavens. The only resource left to me for estimating the distance that I travelled was to count my steps, and in my despondency over my losses I found a kind of melancholy satisfaction in the performance of this monotonous task, which probably had never fallen before to the lot of any other African traveller. My patience, however, was, as it were, an anchor of safety that I threw out after my calamity: I seemed to myself like a ship, which, though seaworthy in itself, has thrown overboard its cargo as the only hope of getting into port. An enthusiast I set out, enraptured with nature in her wildest aspect, and an enthusiast should I have remained, had not the fire clipped my wings; but now, helpless on the inhospitable soil of Africa, I could not but be conscious how powerless I was to contend with the many obstacles, both physical and material, that beset my path; but in the place of enthusiasm, patience, that overcomes all misfortune, came to my aid, did me good service, and kept me from sinking.

I must confess that the first few days' journey threatened to exhaust what spirit still remained to me, but by degrees my equanimity was restored, and persevering in my design I soon became accustomed to a practice to which I owe some of the most reliable results of the survey of my route. As a consequence of this method of counting my steps I succeeded in attaining very considerable accuracy in the relative distances noted on the map, although very probably I may have been unable to avoid an error of from 5 to 8 per cent. in the absolute distances themselves; of course, my steps were not so perfectly uniform in length as the divisions of a

* The negro races of Central Africa also, without any notion of hours as a division of time, are able to indicate the time of day by the same method, which for the equinoctial regions may be considered quite practical.

measuring rod ; but, after all, the footsteps of a man are a much more accurate standard of measurement than those of a beast ; the camel, for instance, as is well known, when it is urged to greater speed does not increase the number of its steps, but only increases their length ; whilst the paces of a man, at whatever rate he may walk, do not vary much from an average length. Anyone may easily put this matter to the test for himself by measuring the distance between his footprints on the moist side of a river, and he will find that no increase nor diminution in his rate of progress will make a very material difference in their successive distances. My own paces varied, according to the nature of the roads, from two feet to two feet four inches in length, and my method of computation is readily described. I first counted hundreds, telling off each separate hundred on my fingers ; when I had reached five hundred, I made a stroke in my note-book, and on reaching another five hundred I made a reverse stroke upon the one already made, thus forming a cross, so that every registry of a cross betokened a thousand paces ; all beyond five hundred were carried on towards the next stroke, and between the various strokes and crosses I inserted abbreviated symbols, as notes about the condition and direction of the road ; thus I was prevented from either over or under estimating the number of my steps, and at the close of each day's march was able at my leisure to sum up all the entries and duly record the result in my diary. In the six months that elapsed before my embarkation at the Meshera I had in this way taken account of a million and a quarter of my footsteps.

The route which I had taken towards the Dyoor led through Dubor and Dangah. On the 16th of December the Molmul was still full of water, but had no longer any perceptible current ; the brook passed along a considerable, though gradual depression, the rising ground about Dubor being visible for a long distance to the west. All the pools